

# Peter was NOT the First Pope

AND

## Women as “Ministers” IN THE BIBLE!

### Romans 16

Two-thirds of the last chapter of Romans consists of greetings:

“Greet **Priscilla** and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus.” “Likewise greet the ecclesia that is in their **HOUSE**.” “Greet **Mary**, who bestowed much labor on us.” “Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen.” Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.” Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.” “Salute Philologus, and **Julia**, Nercus, and his **sister**, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.”

And so the list runs, including **both men and women** impartially.

**1 I commend unto you Phoebe, our sister, being a servant (minister? ? ?) of the ecclesia (mistranslated “church”) which is at Cenchrea.**

The Greek word used here is **diakonos** #1249 in Strong’s Concordance that means: servant, one who runs errands, or an attendant as in one who waits on tables – a waiter.

This is a very important verse. Phoebe is obviously a woman as she is identified as “our sister.” It is also clear that **she is the “minister” of the “church”** – the leader of the group of Believers, in Cenchrea. But here in this verse, the translation is “servant” apparently because she is a woman, whereas the SAME word *diakonos*, when used of men (as in Romans 13:4 and 15:8) is translated “minister.”

The translators have translated the Greek word *diakonos* as “servant” (denoting “running errands” and “waiting on tables”) when it applies to a woman, and “minister” (denoting “leadership”) when it applies to a man.

The point is that the mainline Christian denominations have always adhered to the belief that “women should keep silent in the churches” and have been

embroiled in silly, nonsensical debates for years as to whether it was Biblical for women to be ordained pastors.

The translators, as they did in many other cases in the Bible, translated this passage according to **their OWN preconceived theological beliefs.**

The bottom line is this:

A. God NEVER wanted an Organized Church of any kind in the first place. He did not want men OR women to be certified by the State as “ministers.” He said,

“I just want to be your God, and you be My people.” (Jeremiah 7:23)

Jesus said, “God does NOT dwell in temples (churches) made with hands.” (Acts 7:48; 17:24) (He dwells in our heart.)

“The Unbelievers (mistranslated “Gentiles”) lord it over each other (tell their members what to believe), but it SHALL NOT be that way with you.” (Matthew 20:25,26)

“You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.” (John 15:16)

B. God is NO Respector of Persons

Jesus did not discriminate against women. God called women as well as men to be leaders in Israel: Deborah, a prophetess (Judges, Chapter 4), Huldah, the prophetess (2 Kings 22:14), Miriam, the prophetess (Exodus 15:20), Anna, the prophetess (Luke 2:36), Lydia (Acts 16:14,15), Dorcas (Acts 9:36), and Jesus’ close friends, Mary and Martha. It was Mary, a woman, to whom Jesus first appeared after His resurrection. After He accorded her this great honor, He told her to go tell His disciples that He had risen. But, of course, they didn’t believe her, quite possibly because she was a woman.

**2 That you receive her in the Lord, worthily of the saints, and that you assist her in whatsoever business she has need of you: for she has been a helper of many, and of myself also.**

**3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my fellow workers (not “helpers”) in Christ Jesus:**

**4 Who have for my life risked their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the ecclesias (mistranslated “churches”) of the (former) Unbelievers (nations - Mistranslated “Gentiles”)**

**5 Likewise greet the ecclesia that is in their HOUSE. (ALL the ecclesias – groups of believers - were worshiping in home churches. They did NOT have “church” buildings.) Greet my well-beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruit of the province of Asia for Christ.**

**6 Greet Mary, who toils much for you.**

**7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives, and my fellow prisoners, who are notable among the apostles, who also came to be in Christ before me.**

“The term “relative” is an elastic expression, used sometimes in a broad sense of all Israelites. Paul mentions six of his relatives in the course of these greetings. Some of them, notably Andronicus and Junius, seem to have been very prominent and faithful. They were in Christ before him and suffered imprisonment with him. Indeed, it is not at all improbable that we are to understand them to be apostles, not indeed of the twelve, but such as Barnabas. (Acts 14:14)” Concordant Commentary p 246

**8 Greet Ampliatos my beloved in the Lord.**

**9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.**

**10 Greet Apelles approved in Christ. Greet them which are of Aristobulus’ household.**

“Perhaps this Aristobulus is the grandson of Herod the Great who was later given the government of Lesser Armenia.” Ibid

**11 Greet Herodion, my relative. Greet them that are of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.**

“Narcissus is probably one of Nero’s favorites, for even Nero’s household was invaded by the power of the gospel (Phil. 4:22)” Ibid.

**12 Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord.**

**13 Greet Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.**

“Rufus is probably the same one whose father Simon was compelled to bear the cross (Mark 15:21). If so, he must have been of some prominence among early believers, for Mark is content to identify his father by referring to him and his

brother Alexander. It is touching to see the apostle Paul especially single out his mother, the wife of him who had the honor of bearing our Saviour's cross." Ibid.

- 14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them.**
- 15 Greet Philologus, and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.**
- 16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. The ecclesias of Christ greet you.**
- 17 Now I beseech you, brethren, note them that cause divisions and snares contrary to the teaching that you have learned; and avoid them.**

"How soon dissension and division crept in among the saints! Even before they had received the truth in its fullness, men came with smooth words to draw them from it. Hence the necessity for some authoritative written standard, as this epistle, to which appeal could be made when the truth was in danger." Ibid.

- 18 For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by compliments and adulation are deluding the hearts of the innocent.**
- 19 For your obedience reached out to all. Over you then, am I rejoicing; but yet I would have you wise for good, yet artless for evil.**
- 20 And the God of peace shall be bruising (crushing) Satan under your feet swiftly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.**
- 21 Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my relatives, greet you.**

"Sosipater is probably the same one who is called Sopater in Acts 20:4, who together with Gaius, left Corinth with Paul." Ibid.

- 22 I, Tertius, the writer of this epistle (letter), greet you in the Lord.**

"Tertius was probably a professional scribe, such as to this day are employed to write letters in the East. Paul, however, usually penned the concluding words of his epistles." Ibid.

**23 Gaius, my host, and the whole ecclesia, greet you. Erastus, the administrator of the city greets you, and Quartus, a brother.**

**24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**

**25 Now to Him Who is able to establish you in accord with my gospel, and the heralding of Christ Jesus, in accord with the revelation of the secret hushed in times eonian, (Mistranslated: “that was kept secret since the world began”),**

**26 But now is made manifest, through the prophetic Scriptures, according to the injunction of the eonion (mistranslated “everlasting”) God, made known to all nations (Unbelievers) for the obedience of faith:**

**27 To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be for the eons of the eons (mistranslated “forever”). Amen.**

“The importance of this closing benediction is apparent from the fact that it was written by the apostle with his own hand after Tertius had finished the epistle. Paul characterizes the great themes of his epistle, *my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ in accord with the revelation of a secret hushed in times eonian*. Paul was referring to the “conciliation” – the Good News of Universal Restoration – that was not made known through the ancient prophets, but through prophetic writings, such as this epistle by Paul, as well as in 2 Corinthians.

### **A Significant Omission**

“One thing is very significant, and that is the fact that there is no mention of Peter, who is claimed by the Catholic Church to have been “the first Bishop of Rome.” We may sometimes learn as much by what the Bible does not say as by what it does say. **From what is not said in this place we may learn that so far from being Bishop of Rome, Peter was not in Rome at all when Paul wrote, and that if he was ever in Rome it was after the Epistle to the Romans was written, and long after the “church” (ecclesia – a group of believers) was established and flourishing there.**

“It is most certain that in saluting the members of the ecclesia by name Paul would not have omitted the name of the chief person in the group, whose hospitality he had once shared in Jerusalem for fifteen days. Of course there is abundance of the most positive evidence that neither the ecclesia of Christ, nor the church of Rome was founded upon Peter; but if there were no other, this

testimony of the sixteenth chapter of Romans would be sufficient to settle the matter.” Waggoner on Romans, by E.J. Waggoner, p 16.213