

- in vv.1, 4, and 5 [*TLSB* comments, While there is one true Church, the plural is natural for Paul, who generally uses ‘church’ to refer to a local congregation”]; Roehrs-Franzmann comments, “the churches know of Paul’s plans, all accompany him with their prayers, all bespeak a welcome for him in Rome”; other “greetings from” come in vv.21-23, but in between is what might be called a warning who not to greet [confer Franzmann’s reference to 1 Corinthians 16:20-22 above]) ...
- 16:17-20 – Warning and Promise: As outlined on p.318, we are considering the final chapter of Romans, what can be regarded as St. Paul’s “Commendation and Greetings” (16:1-27), which are integrally related to the preceding content of the letter. At this point, we have considered two subsections, “Commendation” (16:1-2) and “Greetings to” (16:3-16); we are about to consider “Warning and Promise” (16:17-20); and then we will consider “Greetings From” (16:21-23) and “Benediction and Doxology” (16:24-27). Our subheading “Warning and Promise” is different from other subheadings given in various ways, such as by including the mention of the promise that accompanies the warning (Sanday-Headlam, for example, subhead 16:17-20 simply “A warning” and Franzmann’s 1968 outline similarly subheads the verses “The Apostle’s Warning”). Guthrie summarizes verses 17-19 (seemingly omitting v.20) by writing, “the apostle gives a parting warning against false teachers who cause dissensions”, which comment perhaps provides some reminder of the preceding greetings as “references” for St. Paul’s teaching. Franzmann’s 1961 outline refers to “Warning Against Makers of Divisions and Offenses”, and Grothe subheads vv.17-20 “Warning and Promise About Threats to the Fellowship”, helpfully reminding us of the broader context of fellowship not only in the content of the letter but also in the liturgical context in which the letter is being read. Finally here, we note the critical edition of the Greek text that I usually use puts extra spacing after v.20a and before v.20b, though we are keeping v.20b in this subsection, especially as it could be read as part of the promise that in some sense comforts those who take the warning to heart. ... **V.17 I appeal to you**, (the Greek text has a simple conjunction that could be translated “and” or “but”, and either is arguably appropriate given the continued context of fellowship but the turn to a warning of those whom should not be greeted with the kiss of peace [the ESV obviously omits it; Grother prefers the continuative “and”; the CPH editors of *CSSB*, perhaps drawing on Roehrs-Franzmann, refer to the warning as being “abrupt”, which seems to ignore the close connection suggested by the Greek conjunction and the fellowship “fit”; Cranfield considers the abruptness to be exaggerated]; the verb translated “appeal” is often “encourage” or “exhort”, sometimes closely connected with a sermon, arguably as in the use in this verse; the present-tense form of the verb makes sense not only for this particular warning and promise but for the continuation of the letter as a whole; while the verb is first-person singular of St. Paul, the apostle is Divinely-inspired and so the appeal or encouragement ultimately is God’s; the plural “you-all”, or “all you-all”, object of the appeal or encouragement is first those to whom St. Paul originally dictated/wrote and second all of the rest of the Christian Church down through time to us and beyond us with those who follow us; the thought of the appeal or encouragement is completed with an infinitive after St. Paul directly addresses the “you-all”) ...

brothers, (all of the original recipients and the rest of us would seem to be included as “brothers” here, regardless of ethnic origin or biological sex, though the ESV surprisingly does not indicate the inclusion of “and sisters” in this place, as it does in other places; Grothe comments, “For one last and significant time, Paul addresses all the Christians in Rome as *brethren*”) ... **to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught**; (the present infinitive that the ESV translates “to watch out for” could be translated “to scope out” [the Greek root is the same as for the words for the oversight of a bishop and for the bishop himself], but regardless it completes the thought of the appeal or encouragement at the beginning of the verse; the present tense of the infinitive would seem to suggest ongoing or repeated action; the Greek text has a masculine plural accusative article next, translated “those”, which article corresponds to a masculine plural accusative present-active participle at the end of the clause, perhaps better translated “making” or “doing” [the present-tense suggesting ongoing or continued action], with two definite direct objects of their making or doing, perhaps both modified by one prepositional phrase in between [the ESV at a minimum somewhat misleadingly provides two separate verbs, “cause” and “create”, where the Greek text has only one verb]; that the direct objects are definite Grothe says means that they are conceivable in the Roman context; the particular Greek word translated “divisions” is used only here and in Galatians 5:20 [one of the works of the flesh] and in a variant reading of 1 Corinthians 3:3, hardly enough to get a good sense of why the Divinely-inspired St. Paul might have used this particular Greek word for “divisions” and not one of the others, such as that Greek word for divisions over doctrine that break communion fellowship used in 1 Corinthians 11:19 [the ESV translates “factions”], which Greek word gives us our English word “heresies”; worth noting is that the “divisions” and “obstacles” are connected with the usual conjunction translated “and” and share a common verb “making/doing” [we might reflect on whether the conjunction in this case could be translated “even” or “that is” and what the precise relationship between the “divisions” and “obstacles” is {Roehrs-Franzmann talks about disrupting the church and endangering her faith, which may suggest a relationship; Sanday-Headlam says the divisions cause the obstacles}]; the Greek word translated “obstacles” is the perhaps more-usual word for causes of offense, stumbling blocks that can lead one into sin and away from the faith; as noted above, the prepositional phrase “from the teaching which you-all yourselves learned” could modify both divisions and obstacles [Grothe suggests the phrase “characterizes the dissensions and stumbling blocks, and so also the activity of creating them”]; the ESV perhaps over-translates the simple Greek preposition usually translated “from” with “contrary to” and in the process loses any sense of literal separation; we note that the ESV’s “doctrine” is simply “teaching”, coming from one of the Greek verbs for “teaching”, and is not in any sense inherently a “dirty” word; that teaching is immediately modified by a relative phrase “you-all yourselves learned”, using an otherwise unnecessary pronoun “you-all” apparently for emphasis and a simple-past-tense aorist indicative form of a different Greek verb for their having learned the teaching [again the ESV somewhat mistranslates, in this case rendering an

active-voice Greek verb with the passive-voice “been taught”]; notably St. Paul does not refer to from whom the Romans learned the doctrine, much less does he claim that he himself taught them [compare 2 Thessalonians 3:14]; *TLSB* suggests these unnamed people were dividing the Church “from within, probably along Jew/Gentiles lines”, though no basis is given for that statement [Sanday-Headlam also thinks the false teachers are of a Jewish character, as does Luther]; somewhat similarly, the CPH editors of *CSSB* suggest the warning is “against factions, which plagued the church at Corinth, from where Paul wrote Romans”, though the same words expressing the schisms are not used; more helpfully, the CPH editors of *CSSB* draw attention to the divisions and obstacles being contrary to the teaching that the Romans had learned; Franzmann refers to issues in Galatia and Corinth and suggests that they had not yet appeared in Rome or Paul would have dealt with them sooner in the letter and that the warning here would not be so general; Cranfield helpfully reminds, “Sometimes divisions have to be cause for the sake of the truth” and “in certain circumstances the truth itself is a stumbling block”) ... **avoid them.** (the Greek text has a conjunction that is usually translated as “and”, which the ESV does not translated in this case [admittedly, the thought of the appeal or encouragement is completed with the infinitive translated “to watch out for”, but in some sense the two actions are connected in that those who cause divisions and create obstacles must first be identified and then be avoided [confer Franzmann]; the present-tense imperative command translated “avoid” by its tense refers to repeated or continued action, and at its root suggests more than a simple “shunning” or “avoiding” but also a declining that would mean not having communion fellowship, that is, not sharing the Lord’s Supper [the Greek word is a compound of the words for “out of, from” and “lay oneself”, the latter of which word is part of the arguably opposite word “reclining” used in reference to reclining at a table as in communion fellowship; confer Roehrs-Franzmann, who talk about exclusion from communion and liken it to the anathema of 1 Corinthians 16:22, and we might mention also the anathemas in Galatians and the excommunication of 1 Corinthians 5 {not to mention Matthew 7:6’s statement about not giving dogs what is holy or casting pearls before swine}, all obviously with repentance and restoration as ultimate goals, and, as Grothe notes, we pray for those who persecute us and love our enemies]; “them” simply refers back to those just described somewhat at length, that is “the ones” making or doing the divisions and obstacles, who are further described in what follows; we should readily grant that we cannot absolutely avoid false teachers without withdrawing from the world, which is not what St. Paul suggests; *TLSB* comments, “As in Galatians, believers are to reject any false teachings and refuse to associate with those who advocate them. Some have applied this to any and every different teaching, but here it refers specifically to issues that strike at the heart of the Gospel”, and, again, no basis is given for that limiting statement, especially misleading since false teaching and practice on seeming peripheral aspects of the faith can and do affect cut to the central teaching of salvation by grace through faith [Grothe quotes Franzmann saying that “there is nothing in the context to restrict the meaning to a particular teaching or doctrine”]; we might discuss the extent to which the false teachings can be distinguished from the false teachers, if

they can be distinguished at all [Grothe, for example, refers to distinguishing “between the issues, where truth rules, and the people, where love rules”]) ...

V.18 For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, (the Greek clause essentially begins with the coordinating explanatory conjunction translated “for”, which can be used to express cause, explanation, inference, or continuation [in this case perhaps giving additional reason why such persons should be cut off from fellowship or, in some sense, their motivation for making or doing the divisions and obstacles; with reference to a Franzmann article, Grothe suggests 16:18 is “a basis for 16:17, not a further description of those about whom the earning of 16:17 is given”]; the following demonstrative adjectival Greek pronoun that the ESV translates “such persons” emphasizes the nature of those described [there is no separately-expressed subject for the verb in the clause that follows {the ESV’s “they” is certainly included in the verbal form}, so “such persons” here could be the subject of a compound construction]; next in the Greek text is “the Lord of us Christ”, followed by the negative particle translated “not” and the present-tense active-voice verb perhaps better translated “are serving”, and we note at its root the lowest form of servant or slave [ideally those making or doing the divisions and obstacles would be slaves of our Lord Christ]; next in the Greek text is the strong adversative “but” providing the contrast between Whom such persons are not serving and what they are serving; “the of themselves belly” [confer the ESV text note] or “stomach”, in an extended sense the innermost part of a person as the seat of thought, feeling, and choice [perhaps with some intentional contrast to the “hearts” in the next clause, and we would note the influence of the sinful nature, if the people are even still regenerated {confer *TLSB* on sinful human desires}]; the CPH editors of *CSSB* suggest that v.18 “states the evil results of such false teachers—self-service rather than serving Christ”, though the text itself does not explicitly give that as the result) ... **and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.** (the Greek conjunction is the usual word translated “and”; the Greek preposition that follows in this case is used with the genitive case and is usually translated “through” or “on account of” or “because of”, though sometimes “by”; the first Greek object of the preposition is more-literally “smooth words” but “smooth talk” captures the sense of plausible and insinuating speech; the second Greek object of the preposition is more-literally “good-words” [we get our English “eulogy” from this Greek word], and it might normally be translated “blessing” or “praise” but here means well-chosen but untrue words, false eloquency, or flattery, as the ESV renders it; next in the Greek construction is the present-tense verb perhaps better translated “they are deceiving”, with the tense again suggesting ongoing or repeated action and the subject, as noted above, perhaps going back to the “such persons” of the first clause; next is the Greek construction is “the hearts”, which like “stomach” in the preceding clause, can be taken more broadly as the seat of seat of all thoughts, passions, desires, or appetites, good or bad, or can be taken more narrowly as the soul and perhaps that soul as regenerated; last in the Greek construction, perhaps with implications for the transition to the next verse, is “of the ones without evil” or “the innocent” [confer/compare the Greek word translated “evil” in the next verse], which

standing of innocence arguably could be by God’s justification for Christ’s sake through faith) ... **V.19 For your obedience is known to all**, (again the Greek clause essentially begins with the coordinating explanatory conjunction translated “for”, which can be used to express cause, explanation, inference, or continuation [precisely which of those may depend on your interpretation]; next is “the of you-all obedience”, and not seeing a connection between the preceding “of the innocent” and this “of you-all” is difficult; we might ask what “obedience” is in view, and I might suggest the obedience “of faith” as found only in Romans 1:5 and again Romans 1:26 [confer Grothe; or, if of the Commandments, then as observable fruit of faith; *TLSB* refers back to the Greek word’s literal sense of “hearing under” and comments, “They heard the Word, believed, and responded appropriately in their lives”; Roehrs-Franzmann comments that especially the Roman church with its record of fidelity should not tolerate or compromise with the teachers described earlier]; next is “to all”, which is masculine plural but surely used generically of all men and women; last in the Greek construction is the simple-past-tense aorist verb translated “is known”, though maybe better would be “reached” or “arrived”, with the implication being that reports of the Romans faith have reached all, including St. Paul, as he goes on to say) ... **so that I rejoice over you**, (the Greek text essentially begins with the coordinating inferential conjunction normally translated “therefore” [there would be other perhaps more specific ways of indicating a result?]; next in the Greek word order is “one” or “upon you-all”, followed by “I am rejoicing” [there could be some emphasis on the particular joy of the Messianic era]; there is no emphasis on St. Paul as the subject of the verb; of course, St. Paul really knows the majority of the Romans to whom he is writing only by reputation; ending the Greek construction with the verb for rejoicing contrasts with the verb for willing or wishing that immediately follows in the Greek text) ... **but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil**. (the Greek text has a conjunction that can be translated “and” or “but”, and either translation arguably could work in this case [Franzmann discusses Rome’s prominence and reputation’s relating to St. Paul’s concern for them]; the verb that the ESV translates “want” is present-tense and so perhaps better at least “wanting”; next in the Greek construction is “you-all”, in a sense working out in mirror image from the center of the two contrasting verbs; then is “wise to be to the good” [the CPH editors of *CSSB* comment, “Christians are to be adequate judges of false doctrine”, which is certainly true, even if not what is said here]; essentially next is the conjunction that again could be translated “and” or “but”; and last is “innocent to the evil” [regarding “innocent”, this is a different word than that translated “naïve” in the preceding verse, and this word can be “unmixed”, simple”, unsophisticated”, or “innocent”, as the ESV renders it; regarding “evil”, confer/compare the Greek word translated “naïve” in the preceding verse]; Franzmann hears an echo of Jesus’s word in Matthew 10:16 concerning the wisdom of serpents and innocence of doves, and Sanday-Headlam refer also to Philippians 2:15; Luther explains, “prudent in regard to evil, so that they are not deceived; guileless in regard to good, so that they do not deceive”; how will the Romans as St. Paul describes wanting them to be? presumably by their following his/God’s appeal or exhortation and by God’s

doing the one or two things that the Holy Spirit inspired St. Paul to dictate/write next) ... **V.20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.** (the description of God as “The God of peace” [confer 15:33] is all the more striking given the following somewhat violent but peace-achieving image of crushing Satan underfoot; the future-tense indicative-mood statement about the crushing is perhaps surprising given what may be a usual tendency to locate the crushing as taking place on the cross, which has happened by the time St. Paul was inspired to write these words [if not then, when? the Parousia? Grothe refers to “the final consummation of the victory”]; there seems to be a reference to Genesis 3:15 {Grothe includes the idea of the serpent as the “craftiest” of all the creatures and the man and the woman’s naked innocence}, the so-called “proto-Gospel”, though that makes “your feet” all the more surprising [Sanday-Headlam says that Satan will be thrown under their feet that they may trample upon him {or perhaps they do it ultimately in Christ, on which confer Grothe}]; despite the ESV’s mid-construction placement of “soon”, last in the Greek construction, arguably with emphasis, is the prepositional phrase “in” or :with” “speed” [confer our discussion in Midweek Bible Study of Jesus’s coming “quickly” in Revelation; *TLSB* says the phrase can mean “suddenly” or “quickly”, if that helps]; the CPH editors of *CSSB* comment, “Satan, the father of lies, is behind all false teachings”; we noted above that the critical edition of the Greek text that I usually use puts extra spacing at this point, suggesting something less than a paragraph break between v.20a and v.20b, but we are keeping v.20b with 20a, in part because they can be read together as the promise that in some sense comforts those who take the preceding warning to heart [confer Grothe with reference to Schlatter], though the usual view is that the following was the greeting St. Paul wrote in his own hand) ... **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.** (the Greek text simply predicates “the grace of our Lord Jesus ” [the inclusion of “Christ” is textually disputed in this place] with “with-you-all” without a verb to indicate past, present, or future tense or any sort of indicative or optative mood; arguably, after the preceding future tense indicative verb, a parallel future tense indicative verb, “will be”, would make sense [Grothe supplies “is”]; notably there is no “Amen” in the text but likely would have been supplied by the hearers/readers [confer/compare 15:33]; for his part, Franzmann sees the grace of the Lord Jesus being with the Romans until the Day that the God of peace crushes Satan under their feet; Grothe perhaps similarly comments that the blessing “pours the divine gift of grace over the struggling, tempted pilgrim band, assuring them of rich and daily forgiveness as they plod—imperfectly—on their pilgrim trek”) ...