

## GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR MAN FROM START TO FINISH

### **Part VII: God's Righteousness Exemplified In Paul's Personal Messages, Romans 15:14-16:27**

#### **E. Paul's Warning About Satanically-Influenced People**

**(Romans 16:17-20)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. Some people who interact with believers even within the church are influenced by Satan, making life and ministry difficult for God's servants as well as for God's people, cf. 2 Timothy 2:24-26. This problem is enhanced today because so many believers are carnal or immature, so they have not overcome the Evil One as those believers who have reached the intermediate "Young Man" level of spiritual maturity in 1 John 2:14b.
- B. Aware of this problem even in the Early Church, the Apostle Paul gave a closing warning about such people to believers in Rome in Romans 16:17-20, and we view this passage for our insight and edification:

#### **II. Paul's Warning About Satanically-Influenced People, Romans 16:17-20.**

- A. The Romans 16:17-19 admonition warns about people who were influenced by Satan, for Paul summed this warning section in verse 20 by claiming that God would soon bruise Satan under the feet of his readers.
- B. Thus, Paul warned his readers to watch out for spiritual foes who did Satan's bidding in Romans 16:17a,b:
  1. Those who are influenced by Satan cause divisions contrary to upright teaching by godly teachers, 17a.
  2. Those who are influenced by Satan cause traps, snares and obstacles in ministry to people in church contrary to the upright teaching by godly teachers, Rom. 16:17b; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 501.
- C. Having thus identified these Satanically-influenced people, Paul's readers were to "keep on turning away" (*ekklinete*, present imperative of *ekklino*, "turn away from," *Ibid.*; U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 575; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 241) from them, Romans 16:17c.
- D. Paul then gave two reasons why ongoing withdrawal from such people was necessary, Romans 16:18a,b:
  1. Such people do not serve Jesus Christ, but their own potent lusts, meaning they are motivated by strong drives that make them powerfully influential opponents to the truth, Rom. 16:18a.
  2. Such people are thus very manipulative, using smooth, flattering speech to deceive the unsuspecting to fall for their strong, evil influence opposite the truth taught by upright teachers, Romans 16:18b.
- E. Paul stated that he believed his readers were obedient to the truth they had been taught by godly teachers, for that obedience had been testified by others elsewhere (Romans 16:19a), but he was admonishing them out of a concern that they be wise as to what was good but innocent regarding what was evil, Romans 16:19b.
- F. As they heeded Paul's admonition to watch out for people influenced by Satan, Paul's readers would remain strong in the faith and thus resist the Devil (1 Peter 5:9) and he would flee from them (James 4:7), and God would thus soon crush Satan under their feet (Romans 16:20). [Note: contrary to the teaching of many Charismatic Christians, Scripture **never** claims the believer should oppose Satan himself, for Satan is far more powerful than the believer and even other great, good angels (cf. Jude 9). Instead, Scripture teaches believers to overcome Satan by trusting God and His Word (1 Peter 5:9; 1 John 2:14b) so that **God** might defeat Satan. **Thus, we should never ourselves try to overcome Satanically influenced people, but trust God to do so.]**

**Lesson:** Believers in Christ must watch out for parties who are Satanically influenced, people who cause divisions and traps, snares and obstacles that are contrary to the teaching of known godly ministers of God's Word. When they identify such troublesome people, believers must keep away from them as a continual practice in life, for such folk are not only influenced by a very powerful Devil that the believer cannot himself defeat, but they serve their own potent, worldly lusts instead of serving Christ. That causes such folk to be highly motivated to do evil in brash ways such as using smooth and flattering speech to deceive the unsuspecting to depart from the truth.

**Application:** (1) Since the KEY element to DISCERNING people who are Satanically influenced is noting their resistance to credible Bible teaching, the PRIMARY FOCUS of believers toward staying true to the Lord versus being misled is to be BIBLE-BASED in their THINKING. Doing so equips them to spot efforts to depart from the Biblical truth and to avoid falling for the influential efforts of Satanically influenced people. (2) We need to keep on staying away from those who use unusually smooth and flattering speech instead of speaking candidly of the Biblical truth, for those who embellish their words or the way they speak them are not dealing in truth with their hearers, but in deceit. (3) The Holy Spirit equips the believer to discern truth from error as well (1 John 2:12-27), so we believers need to couple Paul's Romans 16:17-20 admonition together with heeding Galatians 5:16 to rely on the Holy Spirit to discern godly from Satanically influenced, spiritually dangerous people.