

Romans 16:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

Analysis

Salute Herodion my kinsman—Aspasasthe Ἡρόδιόνα τὸν συγγενῆ μου (ἀσπάσασθε Ἡρωδίωνα τὸν συγγενῆ μου). Syngenē (συγγενῆς, kinsman) likely means fellow Jew, not blood relative (same term used for Andronicus-Junia, v. 7). Herodion's name suggests connection to Herod's household—possibly a slave or freedman from Herod's family who came to faith. This would be remarkable: the Herodian dynasty opposed Christianity (Herod Antipas killed John the Baptist, Herod Agrippa I martyred James, Acts 12:1-2). Yet here's a member of Herod's household serving Christ.

Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord—Aspasasthe τους ἐκ τῶν Ναρκίσσου τους ὄντας ἐν κυρίῳ (ἀσπάσασθε τοὺς ἐκ τῶν Ναρκίσσου τοὺς ὄντας ἐν κυρίῳ). Again, ek tōn Narkissou (those of Narcissus) suggests household members, not Narcissus himself. A wealthy freedman named Narcissus served Emperor Claudius (died AD 54); his household would have been absorbed into imperial household upon his death. Tous ontas en kyriō (those being in the Lord) specifies believers within the household—not all were Christians, but some were.

Historical Context

Tacitus and Suetonius mention Narcissus, Claudius' powerful freedman secretary, executed after Claudius' death (AD 54). His vast household (slaves, freedmen, dependents) continued serving Nero. Christianity penetrated imperial households

early (Philippians 4:22, 'Caesar's household'). These believers faced unique pressures: serving pagan emperor while confessing Jesus as Lord (Kyrios), navigating court intrigue, risking accusations of disloyalty. Paul honors them by name, affirming their strategic witness in Rome's power center.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that members of Herod's and Narcissus' households came to faith—how does the gospel penetrate hostile environments?
2. How do you navigate being '*en kyriō*' (in the Lord) while serving in secular, even hostile, institutions (workplaces, governments)?
3. What unique challenges and opportunities do believers in positions of power or proximity to power face in witness and discipleship?

Interlinear Text

ἀσπάσασθε Ἡροδίωνα τοὺς συγγενῆ μου ἀσπάσασθε

Greet	Herodion	them	kinsman	my	Greet
G782	G2267	G3588	G4773	G3450	G782

τοὺς ἐκ τοὺς Ναρκίσσου τοὺς ὄντας ἐν

them	that be of	them	the household of Narcissus	them	are	in
G3588	G1537	G3588	G3488	G3588	G5607	G1722

κυρίω

the Lord

G2962