

Junia: an honored believer and a debated description

What is disputed about Junia in Romans 16:7?

Paul honors Junia and Andronicus as fellow prisoners who were in Christ before him. Junia is generally recognized as a woman. Scholars disagree whether Paul includes the pair among the apostles or describes them as well known to the apostles.

What the greeting gives us

Romans 16:7 places Junia and Andronicus in the early Christian network and remembers their suffering. Paul's kinship language may identify fellow Jews rather than immediate family. The verse does not identify a spouse, narrate their imprisonment, or specify the moment they believed. A short greeting can establish real importance without supporting a complete reconstructed biography.

Biblical references: Romans 16:7

Sources: letters

Two readings of the phrase

Linda Belleville argues from Greek usage and reception history that the phrase includes Junia and Andronicus among notable apostles. Michael Burer and Daniel Wallace defend recognition by the apostles instead. This is distinct from the question of Junia's sex. If the inclusive reading is adopted, the scope of apostle also requires discussion; the verse does not make her one of the Twelve.

Biblical references: Romans 16:7

Sources: letters, junia-inclusive, junia-exclusive

Honor without claiming more than the text

Christians debating ministry offices should represent these arguments accurately rather than erase Junia or treat this single verse as a complete church constitution. What remains clear is Paul's public respect for believers whose allegiance to Christ preceded his own and involved suffering. Remembering such people corrects the impression that the mission consisted only of its most famous male figures.

Biblical references: Romans 16:7 · Romans 16:1-16

Sources: letters

Sources

- [letters] Romans through Philemon; passage references are supplied in each section. <https://ebible.org/web/>
- [junia-inclusive] Linda Belleville, "A Re-examination of Romans 16.7 in Light of Primary Source Materials," *New Testament Studies* 51 (2005): 231–249. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688505000135>
- [junia-exclusive] Michael H. Burer and Daniel B. Wallace, "Was Junia Really an Apostle? A Re-examination of Rom 16.7," *New Testament Studies* 47 (2001): 76–91. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688501000066>

Original resource content and artwork: CC BY 4.0. Bible text and third-party materials are excluded.

Pauline Letters · CC BY 4.0 · <https://paulineletters.com/explore/resources/junia>