

## Romans 16:21-27

As we come to Paul's concluding words, it is appropriate in the light of the whole book, that we ask ourselves: So what?

What difference does this book make in our lives? How shall we then live?

### Summary

**In Romans 16:21-27, Paul gives his last words of greeting and closes his epistle with a doxology, reminding his readers that, ultimately, only God, Himself, protects, upholds and establishes the church at Rome.**

#### 1. Final Greetings vv. 21-23

Paul gives his last words of greeting to those who are in Rome and does so through the hand of a secretary (**Rom. 16:21-23**).

Unlike his previous personal greetings and greetings of all the churches, these are greetings from Paul's fellow workers and brothers in the Lord.

#### 2. Textual Variant vs. 24

Vs. 24 is a repetition of words from vs. 20.

By far the earliest manuscripts lack what we today call vs. 24.

The earliest manuscripts that do contain vs. 24 lack those words in vs. 20.

The scribes thus appear to have written the words of vs. 20 in the wrong place, creating vs. 24. Scribes did sometimes write words in the wrong place because a number of manuscripts moved vs. 24 to another place in the chapter, eg. after vs. 27. Thus, the most reasonable conclusion is that vs. 24 arose from a minor scribal error.

#### 3. Extended Doxology vv. 25-27

After the greetings from various individuals, Paul gives the last words of his letter; an extended doxology (**16:25-27**). This is the longest doxology in any of his epistles.

**First**, he reminds his recipients that God alone establishes and confirms the saints at Rome over and against the attempts of the deceivers to tear them down (**16:17-18**).

Paul wants the church at Rome to be centered on Christ and His Gospel (**Rom 16:25**).

He then goes on to explain the progressive march of the Gospel through redemptive history. The gospel of Jesus Christ was a mystery in the Old Testament.

In the Bible, a mystery is something that was once hidden but is now revealed.

God formerly hid the specifics and the grandeur of the gospel of Christ.

God's people knew its overall scope through various Old Testament passages (**Gen. 3:15, 12:3; 22:18; Ps. 2:7-8; Isa. 2:2**). Now, with the revelation and incarnation of Jesus Christ, we know the means by which God fulfilled these great promises.

Now, God has revealed the mystery.

Now the light of the gospel has burst forth on the nations (**Matt. 4:15-16; 12:29; Luke 10:18; Rev 20:2-3**).

The doctrines unfolded in this Epistle reveal to us the mighty plan of redemption, by which our powerful spiritual enemies are overcome, and all the strong and deeply rooted evils lodged within our hearts by nature shall finally be subdued.

#### 4. Outlined Purpose of the Gospel vv. 26b-27

Paul outlines the twin ends to which God revealed the mystery of the gospel of Christ. **First**, "the obedience of faith" (**Rom 16:26b; Acts 17:30; Matt 28:19-20**). **Secondly**, God reveals the mystery of the gospel: so that the conduct of believers brings glory to God. This is why Paul concludes his doxology with the words, to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen (**Rom. 16:27**).

#### 5. Practical Application

Paul concludes his epistle in the same way he began it.

The apostle is the herald for the inaugurated King, Jesus, and proclaims His gospel to the nations (**Rom. 1:16-17**). Everything Paul has written points to Christ.

Christ is the culmination of all history; the revelation of the mystery of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the manifestation of God's glory, demonstrated in the salvation of Christ's bride, which is a display of God's love and mercy.

The gospel is the means by which God causes His people to walk in His statutes.

God's people obey His law. When people do not repent and instead rebel, God still manifests His glory in His righteous judgment of the wicked.

All of history has been unfolding "according to the commandment of the everlasting God" (**Rom. 16:26**) for the supreme end of His glory: the revelation of the mystery of the gospel, the salvation of His people, and the judgment of the wicked. The revelation of the mystery, salvation, and judgment all rotate on the axis of God's glory. When we contemplate our lives, our actions, our thoughts, on what axis do they rotate? God has redeemed us for obedience so that we can present our lives as living sacrifices. If we fail to do this, then we must ask the sobering question of whether we have truly understood the gospel of Jesus Christ.

God has brought us out from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. He has raised us from death to life and God is now conforming us to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit enables us to walk in the paths of righteousness for the sake of Christ's name. Our triune God has given us all these blessings for one big reason to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

How shall we then live?

Soli Deo gloria; to the glory of God alone.