

Sent: Wednesday, May 2, 2018 10:43 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Romans 15:14-16:27

"Now to Him (God) who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept in secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and the Scriptures of the prophets; according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever! Amen!" (Romans 16:25-27)

Therefore, it is with these words that Paul closes his letter to the Roman believers--words that praise God for His redemptive work through Jesus Christ and summarize some of the major themes in Romans!

Paul's words are recognition that the believers in the church of Rome are true believers indeed! They have been "established"! Justified by grace through faith! Imputed with the righteousness of God! Grounded and secure in their faith! Now demonstrating their moral excellence through the working of God's Spirit within their lives!

According to Romans 15:14, there was abundant evidence of their salvation: lives full of goodness, moral excellence, and spiritual knowledge! In fact, Paul, early on in his letter (Romans 1:8) wrote: "First I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world"! They were "established"! In addition, it was a testimony to the world!

So why, one might ask, the need for the letter, if they were already "established" in the faith?

Paul says, in Romans 15:15-16, that it was "to remind you again, because of the grace that was given to me from God, to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit!" He had already traveled to the furthest reaches of the Roman Empire--on his three missionary journeys--and planned to finally visit Rome, via Jerusalem, on his way to Spain! His "missionary zeal" and calling are shown in Romans 1:14 where he wrote: "I am under obligation both to the Greeks and the barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome!"

In addition, where better to send--and document for the ages--his great doctrinal epistle than to the church of Rome, the capitol of the Roman Empire, and the very seat of human power! However, the epistle is obviously intended for all the churches--and to the whole world, and to us today--as the centerpiece of Christian theology!

In addition, among other things, the letter to the Romans reveals the "mystery, which has been kept secret for long ages past"--the mystery of God's plan from all eternity to provide redemption for Gentiles as well as Jews, and for all peoples of the world! Including us!

Peter writes of it this way: "As to this salvation, the prophets of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow! It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things into which the angels long to look!" Wow!

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:7--"But we speak God's wisdom in mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory..."

And in Colossians 1:25-28--"Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the ages past and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory!"

Did Paul ever make it to Spain? Probably not! But he was still able to report at the end of his life: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me on that day; and not to me only, but to all those who love His appearing!" (II Timothy 4:6-8, KJV)

MacArthur asks: "Is it any wonder that Paul cries out in final conclusion of this great treatise: "To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever! Amen!"

Next week, we will meet together one more time to take a look-back at this wonderful book of Romans! And we invite all of you, in preparation that time together, to read it through again, if possible at one sitting, and with perhaps a fuller understanding of the "mystery"--and wonder--of it all!

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