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Soli Deo Gloria

Romans, Part LXX

Romans 16:21-27

Stuart W. Bryan

I. Seventy (Gen 10; Num 29:12ff; Lk 10:1ff)

Romans 16:21–27 (NKJV)

²¹Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you. ²²I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, greet you in the Lord. ²³Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother. ²⁴The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

²⁵Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began ²⁶but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—²⁷to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

II. Concluding Romans

A. Closing Greetings (21-24 cp. Acts 17:5-9; 19:21-22; 20:4; 1 Cor 1:14)

B. Closing Benediction (25-27)

Paul ascribes *glory to God*. Why to God? Because He is *able to establish you* (25) and is *alone wise* (27). While the gods of the nations are mere idols, the Lord is the Living God, the Creator, Sustainer, and Judge of all (cf. Acts 17:25; Rom 1:20-23; 2:8-10; 11:36). And this glory is *through Jesus Christ* (27). The only way that the blessings of God and not His curses can come to us is because of Jesus, for the Name Jesus means Savior.

1. According to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ (1:16-8:39)

First, God establishes us *by the Gospel, the preaching of Jesus Christ*. The Gospel proclaims (1) God's just wrath against the universal unrighteousness of humanity, (2) God's amazing love for lost sinners in sending His Son to die and rise again that all those who believe in Him may be justified, set right with God, and (3) God's glorious power enabling His people to persevere in faith throughout the course of their lives and even unto the resurrection and renewal of all creation.

2. According to the revelation of the mystery made manifest (9:1-11:36)

Second, God establishes us "*according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations*" (25-26). So what is that *mystery*? One other place in Romans Paul used this word. "*For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this _____, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved...*" (11:25-26). *The mystery* is that God's salvation was not just for ethnic Israel but for all nations. As Paul wrote to the Ephesians:

³...by revelation [God] made known to me the mystery... ⁵which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: ⁶that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, (Ephesians 3:3–6 cf. Acts 10:34-43)

3. According to the commandment of the Everlasting God (12:1-15:13)

Finally, God *establishes* us “*according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith*” (26). God is the *everlasting God* whose _____ law never changes. Hence, God is delivering the nations from sin and death that we might be *obedient*. As Paul wrote earlier, “*we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name*” (1:5). Our task is to disciple the nations and teach them to observe all things that Christ has commanded, to teach them *obedience*.

III. Soli Deo Gloria

One of the great slogans of the Reformation was *Soli Deo Gloria* – to God alone be glory. Why do we ascribe glory to God alone? Because God alone is the One who has saved us, is saving us, and will save us in the future. As Pierre Courthial writes in his book, *A New Day of Small Beginnings*, “*We do not have in God a lifeguard, someone rescuing us, helping us toward salvation, but a Savior who definitively saves – who, in His love, alone has the power to save*” (188).

Why is the outpouring of the Spirit so critical to the advance of the Gospel among the nations? The short answer is that we do not have the resources in ourselves to deliver ourselves but are ever dependent upon the enlightening, enabling, and indwelling work of God’s Spirit.

First, we are dependent on the _____ *work* of God’s Spirit. By nature, our minds are darkened by sin and ignorance. Hence, apart from the work of the Spirit enlightening our minds and renewing our wills, we will not embrace the Gospel.

⁵*For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. ⁶But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. (Romans 7:5–6)*

Second, we are dependent upon the _____ *work* of God’s Spirit. As believers, we depend on the Spirit to enable us to obey God. Remember Paul’s stirring words in Romans 8:

¹*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. ³For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1–4)*

Finally, we are dependent upon the _____ *work* of God’s Spirit. The Spirit guarantees our hope, assures us that as God’s beloved children we will be glorified.

¹¹*But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you...¹⁵For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” ¹⁶The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. (Rom 8:11, 15–17)*

IV. Conclusion

¹Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain. (Psalm 127:1)