

It is my goal this morning to finish our exposition of this blessed letter—and I intend to consider vv21-24 byway of introduction—spending the majority of our time on Paul's closing benediction—within this final passage we have basically three things—[1] A Word of Greeting (vv21-23), [2] A Word of Grace (v24), [3] A Word of Glory (vv25-27)...

I. A Word of Greeting (vv21-23)—within vv1-16 Paul has provided person greetings to various members of the church at Rome—in vv21-23 he sends personal greetings from his companions at Corinth—these include Timothy (his fellow worker), and three others—Tertius, Paul's personal scribe, sends his own greeting—Paul continues to pass on greetings from Gaius, his host, along with Erastus, the treasurer of the city, and Quartus, a brother...

II. A Word of Grace (v24)—this is what's called a benediction, which literally means "a good word"—and here refers to "a good word from God"—some have questioned whether or not this benediction is genuine as he's just given one in v20—but there's no evidence to suggest it's not original to the letter—and simply underscores Paul's desire that the church at Rome be settled in the grace of God—that came to them through Christ...

This then brings us to vv25-27—wherein we find A Word of Glory—these verses comprise what's commonly called a doxology—which literally means—"a word of glory or praise"—thus Paul ends the letter with a word of glory or praise to God—now I want to suggest that within this doxology—Paul describes four things about the gospel—that brings glory to God...

Thus—Paul closes his letter in a very appropriate and fitting way—not with greetings to fellow Christians—not even a benediction of God's blessing to man—but a doxology—that is—a statement that gives all the glory to God...

Stuart Olyott—"The closing lines are an ascription of glory to God. They underline various truths and, like the close of a great symphony, leave a majestic chord sounding in the ears. The music of the epistle does not weakly fade away. The final chord is glorious, satisfying and memorable..."

### III. A Word of Glory—vv25-27

#### A. The gospel establishes

1. V25—"Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ..."
2. The first thing that Paul mentions is the ability or power of God—"Now to Him who is able"—or—has power...
3. This refers back to what he said in vv17-20—where the church was described as being assaulted by deceivers...
4. In other words—though the church is bombarded by all sorts of winds and waves—God will establish her....
5. The word "establish" means—"to make stable, set firm, or strengthen"—it here refers to a maturity of soul...
6. Notice how God establishes us—"according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ"—these go together...
7. The first concerns WHAT God uses to establish us—the second concerns HOW God ordinarily use or applies it...
8. [1] What God uses—"my gospel"—that is—the gospel that Paul was commissioned by God to make known...

9. Gill—"The apostle calls the Gospel his, not because he was the author of it, or the subject of it; but because he was the minister of it; it was that Gospel which he was sent and qualified to preach, and did preach fully and faithfully..."
10. Furthermore—I think Paul is making a distinction between his message and that of the false teachers and deceivers...
11. Robert Haldane—"Paul calls the Gospel his Gospel, to intimate that different doctrines would be preached by false teachers as the Gospel. But all other gospels, except that of Paul and the other Apostles, are false. Believers must be established in Paul's Gospel. How many other gospels are now preached as the Gospel of Christ! yet none of them can avail for the salvation of the soul..."
12. [2] How He usually applies it—"the preaching of Jesus Christ"—that is—He establishes us through the gospel by preaching...
13. Shorter Catechism (89)—"How is the Word made effectual to salvation? The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching, of the Word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation..."
14. Thus—Paul teaches us—that it's the word of God preached—that God ordinarily uses to establish His people...
15. Now—it's important to keep in mind that Paul uses the word gospel in a more narrow and in a broader way...
16. Here—I suggest that he's using it in a more narrowed sense—to primarily refer to the good news of Jesus Christ...
17. In other words—it's primarily through "the preaching of Jesus Christ"—that Christian people are established...
18. Thus—the Spirit of Christ uses the word of Christ—to communicate the grace of Christ—to the people of Christ...
19. [a] Establishing is by God's power—that is—He establishes or strengthens His people—by His Holy Spirit...
20. 2Thess.3:3-4—"But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard *you* from the evil one. 4 And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you..."
21. [b] Establishing is through the Word—the word of God is bread and milk that nourish and feed and needy souls...
22. Acts 20:32—"So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified..."
23. [c] Establishing is through or in Christ—that is—it's through the word that Christians have dealings with Christ...
24. 2Cor.1:21-22—"Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee..."

## B. The gospel is revealed

1. V25-26—"according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest..."
2. The NT uses the word "mystery"—to refer to something unknown unless revealed—it here refers to the gospel...
3. The gospel is what we call "special revelation"—which is in contrast to what's called "general revelation..."
4. By "general revelation" is meant those things true about God—that can be learned from conscience and creation...
5. That is—through "general revelation"—we learn something about God's character—His power and divine wisdom...
6. Rom.1:20—"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse..."
7. Notice—general revelation—while it reveals certain truths about God—it's unable to provide enough truth for salvation...

8. No person was ever saved by general revelation—by itself—all it does is—render mankind—"without excuse..."
9. By "special revelation" we learn more about God—about things that we are unable to learn from general revelation...
10. For example—we learn about His love, mercy, grace and goodness—as found in the person of Jesus Christ...
11. In short—everything associated with the gospel—must be revealed specially through God's voice and word...
12. Now—before I go further—let's simply pause here for a second and praise God for the reality of special revelation...
13. God—obviously was under no obligation to reveal Himself further—but it purely an act of God's mercy and grace...
14. Thus—the apostle Paul says two things about this gospel mystery—it was kept secret and it's now made known...
15. [1] It was kept secret since the world began, v25—"according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began..."
16. That is—the gospel was relatively unknown thorough the OT—especially as it had reference to the Gentiles...
17. John Stott—"God's secret, hitherto concealed but now revealed, is essentially Jesus Christ himself in his fulness, and in particular Christ for and in the Gentiles, so that gentiles now have an equal share with Israel in God's promise..."
18. Now—we must not misunderstand Paul at this point—the gospel and the inclusion of the Gentiles—was revealed in the OT...
19. But—his point is—it was comparatively "kept secret" in that—it was revealed in less clarity in promise and type...
20. Think about it—generally speaking—throughout the OC—few Gentiles partook of the grace of God in Christ...
21. Eph.3:1-7—"For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles -- 2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, 3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 5 which 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: 6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, 7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power..."
22. Col.1:24-29—"I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, 25 of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, 26 the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. 27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. 29 To this *end* I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily..."
23. [2] It has now been made known to all nations, v26—"but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of God..."
24. V26—"but NOW made manifest"—that is—the gospel and the inclusion of the Gentiles—is made VERY clear...
25. Rom.3:21-22—"But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference..."
26. [a] How it was made known—"by the prophetic Scriptures"—that is—through the OT prophetic Scripture...
27. This underscores the fact—that this mystery—was revealed in the OT—thought in less clear ways and degrees...

28. Rom.1:1-2—"Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated to the gospel of God 2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures..."
29. [b] Why it was made known—"according to the commandment of God"—that is—the command given to Paul and the church...
30. It's NOW God's purpose—to make known this gospel, this mystery—"to ALL nations"—to the entire world...
31. Matt.28:18-19—"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations..."

#### C. The gospel is obeyed

1. V26—"for obedience to the faith"—this is why the gospel was revealed and being revealed to all the nations...
2. Simply put—God revealed the gospel of Jesus Christ—for the express purpose that sinners would believe it...
3. The message of the gospel comes in the form of a command—every sinner who hears it has obligation to obey it...
4. Now—this phrase—"for the obedience to the faith"—can basically be rendered in two ways—[a] for obedience to the faith [NLJV], [b] for the obedience of faith [KJV]...
5. In other words—we can understand "faith" to refer either to—what we believe or to the actual act of believing...
6. But—either way—it obviously refers to sinners obeying God—by repenting from their sins and believing the gospel...
7. 1Jn.3:23—"And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son"—on Christ Himself...
8. [1] Believe Christ as Prophet—that is—believe EVERYTHING He says in His word about you and about God...
9. That is—believe Him when He says—you have broken God's law and thus—you have offended God Himself...
10. Acts 17:30—"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent..."
11. [2] Embrace Christ as Priest—that is—embrace Him as your sinless sacrifice—who lived and died in your place...
12. The message to sinners is—abandon your own righteousness and submit yourself to the righteousness of Christ...
13. Rom.10:3—"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God..."
14. [3] Submit to Christ as King—that is—bow to Him as your Sovereign Master—to rule and govern your life...
15. The message of the gospel comes to sinners as rebels—unwilling to bow and give allegiance to King Jesus...
16. Thus—the message to the sinner is—throw down your weapons and bow to Christ as your Lord and Master...
17. Ps.2:12—"Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him..."
18. Mk.1:14-15—"Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of god is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel..."

#### D. The gospel glorifies God

1. V27—"to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen"—consider three things in closing...
2. [1] The gospel glorifies God's wisdom—"to God, alone wise"—that is—He's alone infinity and natively wise...

3. Now—this of course doesn't deny that all of God's attributes are glorified in the gospel—His power, love, grace, and righteousness...
4. But—it simply underscores—that in the gospel—the wisdom of God is especially manifest and made known..
5. [2] The gospel glorifies God through Jesus Christ—this is how God harmonizes all of His attributers together...
6. How can God who is holy and righteous—show mercy to guilty sinners—without violating His own justice...
7. In short—How can God remain just and yet justify poor sinners—well—the answer to this question is—the gospel...
8. [3] The gospel glorifies God for all eternity—for all eternity—we will praise and glorify God for His gospel...

#### IV. Closing Observations

1. I can think of no better way to end this message—than providing several reasons for sinners to obey Christ...
2. [1] Your gospel privileges—that is—because of His goodness God has clearly made His gospel known to you...
3. [2] Your gospel obligations—that is—you have an obligation to believe and are more guilty if you refuse to...
4. [3] Your gospel opportunities—by this I mean—by believing you have a greater opportunity to glorify God...
5. Will God be glorified in the damnation of sinners for all eternity—yes—but He's more glorified in their salvation...