

Romans 16: 25-27.

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The Roman epistle commences with that which is "*of God*"; it concludes with an ascription of praise — "to God . . . be glory." God has revealed His righteousness in grace, through Jesus Christ, and such is the value of redemption that glory is secured to God, through Christ for ever. Romans 11: 36 declares, "for of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

The verses heading this short paper give us to know that there is power with God to establish us. We have need of this establishing which gives to us a sense of certainty. So God would have us established in regard to what the apostle Paul calls:

"My gospel"

"The preaching of Jesus Christ"

"The revelation of the mystery."

The epistle to the Romans gives us the teaching of Paul's gospel. In it there is: —

Romans 1 — the revelation of the righteousness of God against the dark background of the ruin of man.

Romans 3 and 4 — Justification on the principle of faith.

Romans 5 — Brings out the blessedness of peace with God; reconciliation; justification of life and the truth of the believer's blessings as transferred from the headship of fallen Adam and being now under the Headship of Christ.

Romans 6 — Deliverance from the power of sin and standing in grace.

Romans 7 — Deliverance from the bondage and condemnation of the law and attachment to the risen Christ.

Romans 8 — Deliverance from condemnation; freedom from the law of sin and death in the power of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Sins have been so answered for in the death of Jesus that God is righteous in justifying the believer. Our guilt has been satisfactorily dealt with. We are brought from the distance and condition of enmity into the nearness and complacency of reconciliation. Hence — though having been made fully aware that we had sinned and come short of the glory of God — we joy in God in addition to rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

From Romans 5: 12 we are taught that not only our guilt — *our sins* — but the state of *sin* in us which produced the sins has been dealt with, sacrificially in the death of Christ. We have been transferred from our old standing "in Adam;" we are now "in Christ" — and *there* there is no condemnation, for there is nothing to condemn. We are freed from the state of being "in the flesh" — we are now "in the Spirit." We are waiting in hope for redemption by power, for then our bodies will be delivered from all that belongs to this groaning creation. We shall be conformed to the image of God's Son.

God would have the truth of these blessed things built into our souls and He is, the apostle says, "of power to establish you according to my Gospel."

The second blessed feature of this establishing power is, "the preaching of Jesus Christ." Preached in relation to the gospel He is the Mercy Seat. For God to meet with men is blessed indeed. The mercy seat speaks of the throne of God (see Psalm 99: 1). Every claim of God must be met to His glory. His rights must be maintained if He is to meet men in blessing. So Christ is set forth a propitiation, read, "a mercy seat through faith in His blood" (Romans 3: 25). The only way to God in righteousness is through faith in that blessed Saviour. God "is just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

He is Lord, the administration of the grace of God is in His hand. He is the head of every man (see Romans 5: 18) and so God extends the free gift to all men to justification of life. He is the Head of a race which stands before God in the righteousness which His act of obedience in sacrificially dying at Calvary has secured. Little wonder that the gospel testimony says "that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead thou shalt be saved."

Precious Saviour!

Preached according to the revelation of the mystery He is the Head of the body (see Ephesians 5: 23 and Colossians 1: 18). He is Head over all things to the Assembly. He is the risen and exalted Man, set at God's right hand "far above all . . ."

The gospel is preparatory to the mystery. One blessed effect of the establishing power of God is that we accept, as vital and delivering truth, that God has finished with man after the flesh. His judgment of that man was expressed at the Cross. The established believer has, as someone has expressed it, "Changed his man." There is only one Man before God — the Man Christ Jesus. Unless we are established in the truth of the gospel we cannot rightly go on to the truth of the mystery, for we learn from Romans 12: 5 we "are one body *in* Christ."

Our position thus is apart from all that is of the flesh, apart from all that belongs to the line of the fallen head, Adam. Just as Eve was of Adam, derived from him by the creatorial work of God, so the Assembly is derived from Christ by the new-creation work of God. In Ephesians 1, already partly quoted, we learn that the Assembly as the body is the "fullness of Him that filleth all in all."

The Assembly, then, is the complement of the glorified Man. As the body, the Assembly expresses the life of Christ the Head. As His bride the Assembly will answer to the love of her Husband for evermore. As His wife she will share with him in the administration of the world-to-come as His helpmeet.

The mystery is not part of God's ways, although the glory of it will be displayed in that period when all His ways shall be headed up in Christ, the administration of the fullness of the times. Neither is it an appendix to the Old Testament, for it was hidden in past ages; silence was kept as to it during the time ages. Now, since Christ has been crucified, raised, and exalted, and the Holy Spirit has come down from heaven, the silence of the ages has been broken — the secret of God is revealed, a fit companion has been secured for His Son.

This product of God's eternal purpose is made known by the prophetic Scriptures according to the commandment of the eternal God. The truth of the mystery will only be found in the epistles of Paul, for to him alone was the administration of it committed. It is now made known, as was the Gospel (Romans 1: 5), to "all nations for the obedience of faith." Verse 27 connects with verse 25: "Now . . . to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."

In closing, we repeat that all which emanates *from* God shall eventuate in praise *to* God. For just

as it has been written in regard to the wonder of God's judgments and the unsearchability of His ways, so we would apply to His eternal purpose and the Mystery which is God's masterpiece — that is, that Christ and the Assembly are one — this ascription, "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Romans 11: 36).