

Romans 16:21-27 "To The Only Wise God Be Glory Forever"

Last week we ended with the 20th verse which states: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."

What I said in regard to this verse was that this is language reminiscent of the first gospel preached to mankind back in the garden of Eden after the fall of man because of his sin. God pronounced judgment on Satan together with the woman and man, but in that pronouncement God gave Adam and Eve the hope of redemption.

God said to Satan in Gen 3:15 "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring [Or seed] and hers; he will crush [Or strike] your head, and you will strike his heel."

God crushed the head of Satan at the cross. He was defeated.

Heb 2:14-15 "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil-- 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."

But until he is finally thrown in the Lake of fire forever, which will take place at the very end of this present sin-filled, cursed world, Satan is still a foe to consider.

He does not have the power over us as he did when we were outside of Christ, but he still goes about like a roaring lion. For the believer Satan's bark is much bigger than his bite. And the reason for that is because the bite of death has been overcome by Jesus through His resurrection.

1Co 15:55-58 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" [Hosea 13:14] 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

And so from an historical perspective Satan is a defeated foe. However, Paul is not simply talking about a future event of Satan's judgment in the Lake of fire, which was secured at the cross of

Christ and the empty grave, when he says the God of peace will soon crush Satan.

There is a sense in which Satan is crushed in a present reality. We are constantly in a spiritual war with the enemy, whether we realize it or not. And God promises to use us to further His Kingdom even when Satan comes against us. Many of the ways in which Satan comes against us is in the schemes he uses and utilizes through his fallen angels and through people in this world.

Paul warns against being swayed by such people in Eph.5:6-8, "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not become partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light."

The Christians in Rome had their own battles with the forces of darkness, but the victory is Christ's and in due time He delivers and exalts Himself in and through us as He thwarts the attacks of the enemy.

And so we should always take heart that the God of peace will crush Satan under our feet as His Spirit enables us to walk in the full armor of God by faith, that we may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

And as Paul tells us in Eph.6... our armor comes from God and involves God's truth, righteousness, the Gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the word of God and prayer. This is our armor and this is our hope of being able to stand firm to God's glory.

And it's all by grace and this is why Paul ends verse 20 with "The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."

You'll remember that Paul earlier sent his personal greetings to a number of people he knew at Rome. Well, as he ends this letter those on the other end; those with Paul, send their greetings.

Rom 16:21 "Timothy, my fellow worker, sends his greetings to you, as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen."

Timothy was a young man who loved the Lord and whom Paul took under his wing in a sense. We meet Timothy in Acts 16 as Paul was going through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Act 16:1-3 "He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. 2 The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. 3 Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek."

Paul was writing this letter to the Romans from Corinth and we know that Timothy stayed on in Corinth to minister them. When writing to the Corinthians in 1Co 4:17 Paul said ... "For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church."

Timothy had a Pastor's heart and at one point in his ministry he pastored the church at Ephesus. In fact, Paul wrote to Timothy to encourage him in his ministry at Ephesus. He wrote in 1Timothy, which is known as one of three Pastoral letters (1 & 2Tim. & Titus),

1Ti 1:1-5 "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, 2 To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 3 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer 4 nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work--which is by faith. 5 The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."

At the time of Paul's writing to the Christians in Rome, Timothy was with Paul and sends his greetings to the church in Rome. As far as the other three mentioned in verse 21; Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater we aren't sure who they are.

These three names were quite common and they do come up in other portions of God's word.

One Lucius is mentioned in Act 13:1 "In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, **Lucius** of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul."

As far as Jason is concerned we're told of a Jason in Act 17:5-7
"But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city, (Thessalonica). They rushed to **Jason's** house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. 6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, 7 and **Jason** has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus."

And then there was a Sosipater which is a lengthened version of Sopater.

Act 20:4 "He [Paul] was accompanied by **Sopater** son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia."

These may or may not be the same men of whom Paul refers to in Romans. One thing we do know; the men Paul identifies in his letter to the Romans were faithful servants of Christ who traveled with Paul to the glory of Jesus as they encouraged the saints and put their own lives on the line.

The Holy Spirit allows these men to be added to the word of God that the Lord may show us how He takes notice of the faithfulness of all of His people.

We're not told anything about a Tertius, but evidently he was utilized by Paul to physically put pen to paper as Paul dictated what the Lord wanted him to write.

In fact, in many of Paul's letters someone else did the writing while Paul did the speaking. This is thought to be the result of Paul's failing eyesight which might explain why he interjected the way he did in many of his letters.

2Th 3:17 "I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write."

So, as to add validity to his writing Paul writes a small portion, usually the final greeting, in his own hand, which would be the distinguishing mark to identify that the letter was really dictated by the apostle and not some fraud.

1Co 16:21 "I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand."

Col 4:18 "I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you."

Gal 6:11 "See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!"

Again, if failing eyesight comes into play, large letters would make sense.

Speaking to Philemon regarding the slave Onesimus Paul writes in Phm 1:18-19 "If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. 19 "I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back--not to mention that you owe me your very self."

And here in our text in Romans Paul lets Tertius get in a greeting to the church in Rome, identifying himself as the one who penned the letter for Paul.

Rom 16:23 "Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings. Erastus, who is the city's director of public works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings."

Gaius is more than likely the one identified in 1Co 1:14-15 "I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so no one can say that you were baptized into my name."

He was part of the Corinthian church and of course at the writing of this letter to the Romans Paul is writing from Corinth.

Evidently, Gaius had the gift of hospitality as he not only opened up his home to Paul but to the whole church as well.

They may have used his home as a place where part of the church in Corinth gathered for worship or as a place where fellowship could also take place. He was a servant and only wanted to be used by God. He may not have had other gifts like teaching or prophecy, but he had earthly possessions he could use and Godly promptings to want to use them.

Erastus is clearly identified as the city's director of public works. The NAS identifies him as the city treasurer, while the KJV calls him the chamberlain, which is defined as one who is an official who receives rents and revenues, as of a municipal corporation; treasurer.

The word in Greek is actually a manager or overseer. And so, in this case, we see that he is a person of high standing in the city who has great responsibility.

And so this high official, known by everyone in the city of Corinth, is part of the church in Corinth. And not only a part, but evidently an active part as is seen by his mention in this letter to the Romans, who more than likely had some high officials in their church.

Let me also add that just because someone may be important or highly educated or influential, it doesn't mean that we shouldn't be bold enough to share the gospel with them. You never know how the Lord may use you in the life of these types of people to bring them the greatest news this world has ever known.

As far as Quartus, he is simply identified as the brother, or a brother. We don't know any more about him. But, to be identified in this way certainly shows him to be a distinguished brother who must stand out as a servant in the church of Corinth.

William Barclay in his commentary makes an interesting observation about this 23rd verse. He says, "One of the most interesting things in the whole chapter is the way in which again and again Paul characterizes people in a single sentence. Here there are two great summaries....

.... Gaius is the man of hospitality; Quartus is the brother. It is a great thing to go down in history as the man with the open house or as the man with the brotherly heart. Some day people will sum us up in one sentence. What will that sentence be?"

In some of your bibles you have a verse 24; others don't, while some have a verse 24 with no verse after it, only a note in the side column with a verse.

The reason for this is because in some, not all, of the ancient manuscripts there is a verse 24. It reads "May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen."

Whether it's added or not changes nothing of the text. It's similar to verse 20 which says, "The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."

The last three verses of this letter are just praise and adoration of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Rom 16:25-27 "Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 26 but now

revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him-- 27 to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen."

"Now to him who is able to establish you.." You and I have been established by God Himself in Christ Jesus. The word established in the Greek is *sterizo* which means to set fast; the idea being immovable.

Our position before God, by faith in Christ as Lord and Savior, is one which is immovable. And the reason it's immovable is because God is the one establishing us. What God has established He will not let go of.

This is why we can rejoice in our salvation which is not a fleeting thing but one which is eternal. We are sealed for the day of redemption. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

And the apostle John writes in 1Jo 5:11-13 "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

This is glorious news. We don't have to fear the future. We don't have to be in the dark concerning where we will spend eternity if we have humbly come before Christ seeking His forgiveness for the penalty of our sin. He's paid it in full. He's purchased us with His blood and has risen from the dead.

God has established us, but this establishment is only in Christ. John says it, and so does Paul in our text. Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ.."

Where did this gospel come from? It came from God.

Romans 16:25-26 ²⁵ Now 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 which has been kept secret for long ages past, ²⁶ but now is manifested, and by 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;

It started in the Garden of Eden with a promise to Adam and Eve after they rebelled against God and were cut off from personal communion with Him. They were promised that the seed of the woman would be the seed through whom the Messiah or Savior would come to reestablish that communion.

And though it was somewhat shrouded in mystery it was foretold all throughout the O.T. I did an exercise with the guys on one Wednesday night and showed them very clearly the gospel of Jesus Christ from the O.T.

We looked at the Psalms and saw Jesus. We looked at Isaiah and Genesis and saw Jesus. We looked at Exodus and Leviticus and saw Jesus.

In fact, Jesus is seen all throughout the Old testament. Jesus taught about Himself from the O.T. Scriptures. After His resurrection from the dead Jesus appeared to two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus. They didn't recognize Him as they reported the things that just took place in Jerusalem concerning their Master, Jesus.

Luk 24:26-27 "Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself."

And then we read in Luk 24:30-32 "When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. 32 They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

It's the Scriptures which first revealed Jesus to us, many years before He actually took on flesh and came into this world as a man to die for our sins. But it's still the Scriptures which we should go to see Jesus today and to learn more of Him each day as we learn of so great a love that would take Him to the cross for us.

This was the mystery given to Adam and Eve and part of that mystery was that even though the Messiah would come through the Jews it was meant for all men to find forgiveness and be restored to God through Christ.

This is what Paul means in Rom 16:26 "but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, *so that all nations might believe and obey him--*"

A similar thought is found in Eph 1:9-14 "And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. 11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12 in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 13 And you [the Gentiles] also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory."

At the very end of this letter Paul can't help but to enter into praise for so great a salvation.

Romans 16:27 ²⁷ to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

He can't believe it either. But he knows it's the truth. And because he has been given a faith by God to believe he knows the importance of following Christ in obedience out of love for Him.

Faith in Christ produces obedience. It must. The fruit of the Spirit produces faithfulness. I'll be the first to admit that there have been times when my obedience has not always been stellar. But, I praise God for His faithfulness to bring me back to a desire to be obedient. And He will do that for each of us as we are willing to trust Him.

We owe our allegiance and our praise to our great God and Savior. May we live and say as does Paul, "to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen."

May we all say Amen to that and give God all the glory and all the praise He deserves.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has made it all possible. Let me end with praise to Him as Paul conveys it in Eph 3:20-21 "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be

glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,
for ever and ever! Amen."