

p 91 WEEK 12: FINAL SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Romans 16:25–27

The Place of the Passage

All along Paul has been exulting. That is to say, all along he has been worshipping as he is writing. Paul has been so captured by God’s grace that he cannot instruct without celebrating, rebuke without grieving, and command without assuring. He is so utterly convinced of God’s deep love in the grace of Jesus Christ that worship regularly erupts from his heart. He wants it to erupt in our hearts too; that is the point of his writing in the first place. As he gets to the end of his letter to the Roman church, then, he bursts out one final time in praise of God. This short prayer encapsulates the main themes of what he has written. And he does all this as an act of unabashed praise.

What is the ultimate point of Paul’s letter to the Romans? The same as the Bible’s ultimate point: that God’s glory through Jesus Christ would be magnified everywhere at every time.

p 92 The Big Picture

Romans 16:25–27 is a doxology in which Paul gathers up in a few brief lines, as a final song of praise to God, all that he has said in his letter to the Romans.

Reflection and Discussion

Read through the complete passage for this study, Romans 16:25–27. Then write your own notes on the following questions. (For further background, see the *ESV Study Bible*, page 2185; also available online at www.esvbible.org.)

What themes crop up in Romans 16:25–27 that also appeared in 1:1–7?

In what specific areas of your life do you most need gospel strength right now (16:25)?

What does Paul mean when he calls the gospel message a “mystery” (16:25)? As you answer, consider Ephesians 3:3–6; 6:19; Colossians 1:26–27.

p 93 Paul says that the gospel is not only a mystery that has been revealed but also a prophecy that has been fulfilled. What Old Testament prophecies can you think of that point to Christ?

How is God's glory—the full “weight” of all his attributes, characteristics, and self-ness—revealed through Jesus Christ?

As you reflect on your study through Paul's letter to the Romans, what are some things that stand out to you? What are the major things you have learned?

What are some parts of this study that have challenged you? How are you different after studying Romans?

Read through the following three sections on *Gospel Glimpses*, *Whole-Bible Connections*, and *Theological Soundings*. Then take time to reflect on the *Personal Implications* these sections have for your walk with the Lord.

p 94 **Gospel Glimpses**

GOSPEL STRENGTH. Paul prays for his readers in Romans 16:25–27, claiming that God is able to strengthen them “according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ” (16:25). Part of the good news is that the good news gives us strength. The gospel creates its own implications. As Paul had said at the beginning of the letter, the gospel is “power” (Rom. 1:16). The gospel of grace not only ignites the Christian life but sustains it. As Paul says in another letter, the gospel is that “in which you stand, and by which you are being saved” (1 Cor. 15:1–2).

“THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH.” All who exercise faith will necessarily produce a fruitful life of obedience. Faith and obedience must be kept strictly separate regarding justification, but they must be kept closely together regarding Christian living. Obedience flows from faith. As we trust in the Lord and enjoy our gracious status as his children, our hearts are transformed from the inside out. Our behavior changes. Fruit is borne. Such fruit is not what saves us; faith, uniting us to Christ, does. We are not saved *by* obedience, but neither are we saved *without* it.

Whole-Bible Connections

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST. This concluding doxology also takes us back to revisit the reality that Christ is the full-light arrival of what lay in the shadows of the old covenant (Heb. 10:1). In another part of the New Testament, Peter highlights the same searching secret (1 Pet. 1:10–12). Peter says Jesus is the promise “now announced.” Paul says Jesus is the promise “now disclosed” (Rom. 16:26). From such passages we learn that the revelation of the Old Testament displayed the glory of Christ throughout its pages, from the covering given to Adam and Eve at the beginning of the Old Testament (Gen. 3:21) to the covering given to Joshua the priest at the end of the Old

Testament (Zech. 3:1–5). The entire Old Testament longs for someone to come and fulfill all the promises God had made to his people. Jesus Christ is that man. Paul says that the gospel mystery was made known “through the prophetic writings” (Rom. 16:26). The New Testament does not move off in a different direction; the New Testament fulfills and completes the revelation given and begun in the Old Testament.

Theological Soundings

GOD’S ETERNITY. Paul speaks of “the command of the eternal God” in Romans 16:26. God is eternal. In terms of time, he never had a beginning and he will never have an end. He simply *is*. As God revealed to Moses, he is simply **p 95** “I AM” (Ex. 3:14). Our human lives are trapped in time, and we cannot manipulate time to pass any more slowly or quickly. God, however, transcends time itself. He *created* time.

GOD’S GLORY. The final words in Romans read, “to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen” (16:27). To define God’s “glory” is difficult because from one perspective his glory is simply who he is, in all that he is. The full range of his attributes together make God glorious. God’s glory is his resplendence, his holy beauty, his utterly supreme magnificence.

Personal Implications

Take time to reflect on the implications of Romans 16:25–27 for your own life today. Make notes below on the personal implications for your walk with the Lord of (1) the *Gospel Glimpses*, (2) the *Whole-Bible Connections*, (3) the *Theological Soundings*, and (4) this passage as a whole.

1. Gospel Glimpses

2. Whole-Bible Connections

3. Theological Soundings

p 96 4. Romans 16:25–27

As You Finish This Unit ...

Take a moment to ask for the Lord's blessing and help as you continue in this study of Romans. And take a moment also to look back through this unit of study, to reflect on some key things that the Lord may be teaching you.

As You Finish Studying Romans ...

We rejoice with you as you finish studying the book of Romans! May this study become part of your Christian walk of faith, day by day and week by week throughout all your life. Now we would greatly encourage you to study the Word of God on a week-by-week basis. To continue your study of the Bible, we would encourage you to consider other books in the *Knowing the Bible* series, and to visit www.knowingthebibleseries.org.

Lastly, take a moment to look back through this study. Review the notes that you have written, and the things that you have highlighted or underlined. Reflect again on the key themes that the Lord has been teaching you about himself and about his Word. May these things become a treasure for you throughout your life—which we pray will be true for you, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.