

ROMANS: RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH FROM START TO FINISH

XI. Paul's Edifying Concluding Remarks, Romans 15:14-16:27

F. God's Provision Of Victory In The War Over His Truth (Romans 16:21-27)

I. Introduction

- A. As Paul concluded his letter to believers in Rome in Romans 16:1-27, he revealed a deep concern that his readers might gain the victory in the timeless war over God's truth.
- B. We view that closing with Paul's final announcement of God's provision of victory in that war (as follows):

II. God's Provision Of Victory In The War Over His Truth, Romans 16:21-27.

- A. The format of Paul's unusually long closing in Romans 16:1-27 is twice-impacted with remarks that expose his deep concern that his readers gain victory in the timeless war that they faced over God's truth:
 - 1. Paul had given his greetings to specific believers in Romans 16:1-16 before interrupting his conclusion to address the timeless spiritual war that his readers faced over God's truth in Romans 16:17-20.
 - 2. The Apostle Paul then returned to giving greetings to his Roman readers from fellow believers with him in Romans 16:21-24 before providing his concluding benediction in Romans 16:25-27. He sent greetings from co-worker Timothy, kinsmen Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, Tertius, Paul's amanuensis to whom Paul was dictating his epistle to the Romans, Gaius who hosted Paul's ministry team, Erastus, the city's director of public works and Quartus, another brother in Christ, Romans 16:21-24 NIV.
 - 3. However, the closing benediction of Romans 16:25-27 itself returns to discussing Paul's concern that his readers overcome in the war over God's truth to which Paul alluded back in Romans 16:17-20:
 - a. John Murray's commentary on Romans notes, "In verses 17-20 [Paul] had warned against the seduction of deceivers and the paramount need is that believers be so established that they would not be the victims of Satan's craft." (John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, 1975, Vol. II, p. 240)
 - b. Then, significantly, at Romans 16:25a where Paul began his closing doxology, one that is longer than any of his others in his other epistles in Scripture (Ibid.), the apostle wrote of God's establishing his readers in spiritual truth, a remark that recalls his expressed desire in Romans 1:11 to see them thus established, Ibid.
- B. So, since in the start of his benediction at Romans 16:25a, Paul noted that God was able to "fix (firmly), confirm, establish, strengthen" (*sterizo*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 775) his readers according to his gospel, Paul explained that "(o)n God alone must reliance be placed," Ibid., Murray.
- C. Paul then wrote how God would cause this establishing of his readers in the truth to occur, Romans 16:25b-27:
 - 1. The Gospel of Christ that was preached by Paul and other believers in the world was given in accord with the Scripture revelation of the previously hidden truth that has now been manifested, Romans 16:25b-26a.
 - 2. That previously hidden truth was actually stated by Old Testament prophets, but not clarified until the life of Christ and is now being proclaimed by the Church to all nations, [the gospel that salvation is available through Israel's promised Messiah based on faith in His substitutionary atonement for the sins of the world, Romans 16:26b with passages like Isaiah 53:1-12.]
 - 3. Thus, to the only wise God through Jesus Christ is the glory to be given forever, Romans 16:27.
- D. Another passage that details the infinite sovereignty of God the Father and Christ over all things related to the Church, what shows God's ability to establish the Church in His truth, is Ephesians 1:19-23 ESV (as follows):
 - 1. God has exhibited infinitely great power toward us believers in Christ, Ephesians 1:19a.
 - 2. This power is in accord with the working of His great might that He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, Ephesians 1:19b-20.
 - 3. That enthronement of Christ is far above all rule, authority, power, dominion and every name that is named in the angelic, demonic or human realms, both in this age and in the age to come, Ephesians 1:21.
 - 4. God thus put all things under Christ's feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, v. 22.
 - 5. The Church is Christ's spiritual body, the fullness of Him Who fill all believers in every way, Eph. 1:23.

Lesson: *Concerned about his readers' need to gain victory in the ongoing battle they faced of holding to God's truth, Paul mixed his closing greetings with teaching on that need, summing that one must ultimately rely only on God and His infinite power and commitment to the Church to give believers victory in this battle.*

Application: *Though we believers are responsible to hold to God's truth in the angelic conflict over that truth, ultimately, our reliance must be on God alone to give us the victory. May we then rely on God for this victory.*