

ROMANS 12:1-16:27 | LIFE TODAY*Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 46***ROMANS 15:15-16:27 | PAUL'S MINISTRY TO ALL***Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 51***ROMANS 16:25-27 | PAUL SPEAKS OF THE MYSTERY***Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 52***VERSE 25 - BLUE**

Paul concludes with a moment of praise for the One with the "power to establish you." At the beginning of his epistle, Paul expressed his desire "to impart to you some spiritual gift, to the end that you may be established" (Rom. 1:11). In our commentary on that verse, we speculated that this "spiritual gift" was the mystery Gospel, and that the Romans, therefore, did not have such a Gospel, but Paul's desire was to share it. That is, the Romans were in the position of Apollos, who was "mighty in the scriptures" (Acts 18:24) but did not know of the Pauline message.

Now, Paul makes it clear that the establishment would come through "my Gospel," which is defined as "the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery." This is only the second use of "my Gospel" in the epistle, and in the first use (see 2:16), Paul was only affirming that the prophesied judgment was not affected by the new Gospel. Only here does he define "my Gospel."

Contrary to those who oppose the "right division" style of dispensationalism, the view is not about "preaching Paul rather than Jesus". Such is a straw-man opposition to right division. Paul himself "determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). Right division of scripture is all about and wholly based on the ministry of Jesus Christ.

The ministry of Jesus Christ changed after "the revelation of the mystery." Before this revelation, Jesus's ministry focused on fulfilling promises to Israel, living in obedience to the law, and offering Himself as a sacrifice for Israel. However, after Israel rejected both their King and His Kingdom, the mystery revealed God's plan to introduce the "dispensation of the grace of God" (Eph. 3:2) instead of judgment.

In this dispensation, God used the outcomes of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus as the foundation for freely offering reconciliation with Him. This free gift was provided outside of any covenants with Israel and thus outside the Law itself.

Originally, Jesus's ministry was about being "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. 15:8). Yet, according to the revelation of the mystery, Jesus's ministry transformed into one of reconciliation, no longer tied to national Israel. Paul interprets Jesus's role for those outside the covenants (1 Cor. 11:1).

This raises an important question: what is "the revelation of the mystery"? Paul states that it "was kept secret since the world began," making it unsearchable until revealed, as he asserts in Ephesians 3:8. Moreover, in Ephesians 3, he specifically states that the revelation of the mystery

was given directly to him (v. 2). Therefore, to comprehend it, we must look for a revelation that remained secret until Paul received it.

Sadly, the vast majority of Christendom has failed to recognize that Paul was given any kind of mystery revelation. This failure has been monumental in Christianity and is the source of all manner of theological error. It would be a difficult task even to find a commentary that acknowledges that some believe there is a Pauline revelation. The vast majority of commentaries will simply gloss over these few verses and completely fail to see any significance. This is not only sad but also displays the academic ineptness that reigns in theological education and teaching today.

The strongest evidence supporting a Pauline mystery, apart from passages explicitly stating this, is the examination of whether Pauline theology introduced anything new to Christianity. The significant changes brought about by Paul are so distinct that even critics of the Christian faith acknowledge them, often referring to Paul as the founder of Christianity. This is done to highlight the readily apparent fact (which Christians often overlook) that Pauline Christianity greatly differs from the teachings of Jesus. Indeed, the difference is so pronounced that without Pauline theology, the New Testament would simply be Judaism that accepted Jesus as the Christ, but Judaism still.

VERSE 26 - BLUE

The mystery was once hidden, but now it has been revealed. The phrase "but now" signifies a transition. While Paul might theoretically mean "for the last 25 years," the natural reading of the text suggests a more recent revelation.

An even more unconventional interpretation would be, "The mystery was made known through the prophets hundreds of years ago, and I'm merely communicating to you what the prophets have taught." This interpretation is common in many commentaries.

These interpretations mistake the verse by reading their own expectations into it, a process known as eisegesis. They also do so by ignoring the "and," implying that the mystery was "made manifest...by the scriptures of the prophets." This is a significant error. Firstly, it contradicts the grammatical structure of the sentence. Secondly, it lacks logical coherence, as it suggests a recently revealed secret had been unveiled hundreds of years earlier.

It may be helpful to mentally insert a comma after the word "and." In this context, it would read "...made manifest, and, by the scriptures of the prophets...made known."

In Greek, the term $\delta\iota\alpha$ [dia] refers to the means by which something is achieved. The error in interpretation is the assumption that "the prophets" were the means of unveiling the mystery. In reality, the prophets serve as the means for the mystery to be "made known."

When Paul mentions that the mystery was revealed "according to the commandment of the everlasting God," this does not imply that it was disclosed through prophetic commandments. Instead, it was the everlasting God's commandment for Paul to reveal the mystery, as seen in 1 Timothy 1:1 and Titus 1:3.

Even reading just the book of Romans, or observing Paul's modus operandi in the book of Acts, it's evident that he frequently uses the prophets as the foundation to teach the mystery. After all, how can one aspect be understood without its contrast? Light cannot be known without darkness, sickness without health, and so on. In fact, Paul has quoted from the Hebrew Scriptures dozens of times (approximately 60) in the epistle of Romans alone, and at least 23 of those are from the prophets (see list below). It becomes clear that the teaching of the prophetic program is essential to the teaching of the mystery program.

The mystery was made known “for the obedience of faith.” This seems somewhat problematic since salvation under Paul’s Gospel is by grace through faith without works, and “obedience” seems inherently a works-word in our usage. However, the Oxford English Dictionary does give definition 1.3 of “obedience” as “Homage or submission to a person, thing, quality, idea, etc.; a formal gesture or salutation expressing this; a respectful acknowledgement, as a bow or curtsy.” [https://www.oed.com/dictionary/obedience_n?tab=meaning_and_use#34051763, Accessed December 21, 2023.] The idea, therefore, is that the mystery was made known through the prophetic writings so that the nations might “pay homage to” or “give a respectful acknowledgment” of the mystery. A robust argument can be built that when the mystery is “made known” in the proper way (through the prophetic writings), then it will be acknowledged as legitimate in its own right.

Quotations or allusions from the prophets in Romans:

- Romans 1:2 - Allusion to Isaiah 9:7, Micah 5:1
- Romans 9:25 - Quote from Hosea 2:23
- Romans 9:26 - Quote from Hosea 1:10
- Romans 9:27-28 - Quote from Isaiah 10:22-23
- Romans 9:29 - Quote from Isaiah 1:9
- Romans 9:33 - Quote from Isaiah 8:14, 28:16
- Romans 10:16 - Allusion to Isaiah 53:1
- Romans 10:20 - Quote from Isaiah 65:1
- Romans 10:21 - Allusion to Isaiah 65:2
- Romans 11:3-4 - Allusions to 1 Kings 19:10,18
- Romans 11:8 - Allusion to Isaiah 29:10
- Romans 11:26-27 - Quote from Isaiah 59:20-21, 27:9
- Romans 11:34 - Allusion to Isaiah 40:13
- Romans 14:11 - Quote from Isaiah 45:23
- Romans 15:12 - Quote from Isaiah 11:10
- Romans 15:21 - Allusion to Isaiah 52:15
- Romans 10:19 - Allusion to Deuteronomy 32:21
- Romans 10:13 - Allusion to Joel 2:32
- Romans 9:13 - Allusion to Malachi 1:2-3

VERSE 27 - BLUE

Paul closes with his customary note of praise.