

16:14 and 16, and confer above at 16:1 where St. Paul is thought to be in Cenchreae]) ... **Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you.** (again the Greek puts first the verb “he is greeting” and the object “all y’all”, followed by the name Erastus, which is used three times in the New Testament, referring to a companion of St. Paul and, as here, to the public treasurer of “the city”, presumably of Corinth [*TLSB* comments that the “Combined evidence places Paul in Corinth when he wrote Rm.”; and *TLSB* notes that “An inscription discovered in 1929 near the theater in Corinth mentioned Erastus and identified him with this office”, though compare Cranfield; Sanday-Headlam suggests he is “presumably mentioned as the most influential member of the community”]; and “Quartus the brother”, which might most naturally be the brother of Erastus and not of St. Paul and whoever else the ESV might be thinking of with the insertion of “our” [in this chapter, see the Divinely-inspired St. Paul’s use of the term “brother” in vv.14 and 17; Cranfield thinks “fellow Christian” is “surely meant” and calls the idea that Quartus is Erastus’s brother “highly improbable”]; regardless, *CSSB* says “Quartus” means “fourth”, as in fourth “son” [Grothe points out Tertius is “third” and so Quartus could “perhaps” be his brother, but Cranfield called such an idea a flight of fancy]) ... Note that in the next subsection we will take up the matter of 16:24’s “omission” and any “bracketing” of 16:25-27. ...

- 16:24/25-27 – Benediction and Doxology: As outlined on p.318, we are considering the book of Romans final major section, what can be regarded as St. Paul’s “Commendation and Greetings” (16:1-27), which are integrally related to the preceding content of the letter. At this point, we have considered four subsections: “Commendation” (16:1-2), “Greetings To” (16:3-16), “Warning and Promise” (16:17-20), and “Greetings From” (16:21-23). We are about to consider “Benediction and Doxology” (16:24-27). Sanday-Headlam has that same subheading and verse division (there arguably is some “benediction” nested in the “doxology”), and Franzmann’s 1968 outline is similar, calling vv.25-27 the “Concluding Doxology”. Guthrie refers to “a benediction and a magnificent doxology”, and Grothe calls vv.25-27 “Canonical Doxology” (though some of what he says about that may be problematic, depending on how it is understood). While longer than other endings of other Epistles, Romans’ ending is consistent with its themes and purposes. At the end of chapter 15 (p.318), we previously mentioned various “endings” of the Epistle, and, at the end of the prior subsection (above), we noted that there are issues of both “omitting” v.24 and “bracketing” vv.25-27. Found in some manuscripts, what was originally numbered as verse 24, as given, for example, in the “margin” of the ESV reads, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” The ESV obviously gives vv.25-27 without any indication of its debated textual tradition, but the critical edition of the Greek text that I usually use puts vv.25-27 in brackets reflecting that textual debate. Grothe has an interesting theory about the Church’s use of the Epistle influencing the development and placement of these verses, which theory I mention here only because I had noted on p.318 that *LSB* uses these verses by themselves as the Epistle Reading for Advent 4B. Much more could be said about the two related textual matters, but, in the final analysis, no doctrine is at issue, including the

teaching of the inspiration and therefore inerrancy of Holy Scripture. ... **V.25**  
**Now to him who is able to strengthen you** (the Greek coordinating conjunction that is more-often translated “and” or “but” can be rendered “now” as the ESV does in this case, going back not only to the preceding subsection “Greetings From” and even all of the larger section “Commendation and Greetings” but probably also to the letter as a whole [as completed in 16:27, giving glory to God as the final thing of the final things and as the final thing of all things; Grothe translates “And now” and comments “The doxology, formal and liturgical in style, has been formulated so as to connect onto something preceding it and to serve as a concluding doxology...It serves in precisely this way for the reading of the Epistle to the Romans”]; God is described as the “One being-able you-all to-make-fast/establish”; the present-tense participle naturally describes God as continuing to be able [*TLSB* ties back to the word translated “power” in 1:16, from which we get “dynamite”]; the object is the plural you [“all y’all”], all of the letter’s original hearers/recipients and also all of us; the aorist infinitive completes the thought of what God is able to do, in this case making firm [Sanday-Headlam point back to 1:11’s expressing one of the purposes of his visit to them’s being to strengthen them; the simple-past tense aorist infinitive might be surprising if one-time action is strictly in view, though we might think of conversion and its lasting impact]; the means of God’s strengthening all of the letter’s hearers seems to be described in at least the first “according to” phrase, depending on how all of what follows is syntactically connected) ... **according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ**, (first in the Greek text is the preposition transliterated *kata* and translated “according to” used in this phrase and both the next phrase and a third phrase in 16:26; in this phrase, there appear to be two objects to the preposition: “Gospel” and “preaching”, unless the coordinating copulative conjunction is taken in such a way so that the first object is explained by the second object [*TLSB* says the terms are synonymous, with “Gospel” emphasizing the content and “preaching” emphasizing active proclamation]; next in the Greek text is “the Gospel”, the ninth of its nine uses in Romans: the Gospel “of God” in 1:1 and 15:16; “of His Son” in 1:9 and “of Christ” in 15:19; without modification in 1:16, 10:16, and 11:28 [Roehrs-Franzmann goes back especially to 1:16 and connects the power of God through His Word for salvation {confer Franzmann, on which they probably drew}]; and “my” in 2:16 and this verse; the first-person singular genitive personal pronoun “of me” follows in the Greek text [*CSSB* comments, “Not a gospel different from that preached by others, but a gospel Paul received by direct revelation”; Sanday-Headlam highlight the command given to St. Paul regarding the Gentiles as described in the Epistle itself]; next in the Greek text is the coordinating copulative conjunction normally translated “and” or “also” or “even” or “indeed” but that can have the sense “that is” [confer Cranfield “my gospel, that is to say, the proclamation of Jesus Christ”]; next in the Greek text is “the preaching”, its only use in Romans; last in the Greek text, but certainly not least, is “of Jesus Christ” [*CSSB* comments, “it is about Jesus Christ, who is its content”; Sanday-Headlam likewise call it an “objective” genitive, with the preaching’s being “about Christ” {confer Cranfield}; while we might prefer “the Gospel of Jesus Christ” and “my preaching”, maybe “of it”, clearly the

Divinely-inspired St. Paul should not be taken as suggesting either that the Gospel is about him or that there is a difference between “his Gospel” and “the preaching of Jesus Christ” {compare Sanday-Headlam, who sees St. Paul’s unique Gospel as “complementary to and explanatory of” the common faith of the Church; Cranfield rejects the idea of “a peculiarly Pauline gospel”}; Grothe sees Paul’s Gospel as both Paul’s content and activity and sees it as normed by the preaching of Jesus Christ, Jesus’s own preaching activity and content of Himself) ...

**according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages** (again first in the Greek text is the preposition transliterated *kata* and translated “according to” used in this phrase and both the preceding phrase and a third phrase in 16:26; in this case the preposition may link to the immediately-preceding gospel and/or preaching, or the preposition may link back to God’s ability to strengthen [the two “according to” phrases arguably could be taken as equivalent parallel expressions of the same thing: the Gospel/preaching and revelation both as means of God for strengthening the letter’s hearers; Cranfield says this second phrase modifies the preaching of Jesus Christ {which he said explained “my Gospel”; confer Grothe on the linking}]; in this case the object of the preposition is “revelation” or “unveiling” [the Greek word, transliterated *apokalupsis*, gives us our English word “apocalypse”, which is usually associated with the book of Revelation and its final battle of Divine judgment described in highly-symbolic images, which relate to the category of “apocalyptic literature” {perhaps ironically the Greek term for “revelation” is connected with things that often seem to be hidden}]; this particular revelation is “of a/the mystery”, not so much a “murder mystery” or other “who-done-it” but something hidden, as the verse goes on to say [Sanday-Headlam refers to St. Paul’s working the mystery out in Romans and taking the conclusions for granted in the later Captivity Letters, but we do not want to underappreciate Divine inspiration of all the canonical letters]; next in the Greek text is “for times”, with the noun referring to time in general that can be short or long, as the ESV suggests with its translation in this case; the Greek adjective is more-usually “eternal” [confer of God in 16:26], without beginning and/or end [perhaps the without beginning is indicated in this case, since what follows suggest the hiddenness has now ceased {confer *CSSB*}; Luther mentions a belief that the mystery of Christ’s Incarnation was unknown even to the angels {which raises or answers a question about the devil’s knowledge}]; last in the Greek text is the perfect passive participle that can be translated “having been kept secret”, with the perfect tense usually associated with an action in the past that has ongoing impact and the passive voice concealing the subject of the action, Who in this case we would say is God) ... **V.26 but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations**, (essentially first in the Greek text is the coordinating conjunction that can be translated either as a continuative “and” or an adversative “but” [and arguably either could work in this case]; next in the Greek text is “having been made clear” or “manifest” [our “epiphany” is at its root], a simple-past tense aorist passive participle, again concealing the subject of the action, Who in this case we again would say is God [likewise with the next aorist passive participle, seemingly parallel; Franzmann

says Christ “is” the disclosure, which would still have “God” as the agent]; next in the Greek text is the adverb “now” indicating the present, at least insofar as it is distinct from the previous time when the mystery was kept secret [the precise point at which one might say that the previously-secret mystery became presently-manifest may depend on how one takes what follows in the rest of the verse {for example, if the prophetic writings/Scriptures are the Old Testament, then “now” would not necessarily have to be limited to the New Testament era; for his part, Cranfield says, “It is only in the present time of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ and the ongoing proclamation of Jesus Christ by the Church that the secret of God has been revealed, manifested”, taking the point of contrast as that between before the Christ’s Incarnation and after it, though Cranfield also goes on to recognize an even greater revelation on the Last Day}]; essentially next in the Greek text is a particle of connection or addition that the ESV translates as a coordinating copulative conjunction “and” essentially *making* parallel what at first glance might seem to *be* parallel aorist passive participles [that is, the “been disclosed” and “been made known”], even though that second participle comes at the very end of the verse in the Greek text, essentially looping in the other four prepositional phrases [whether there is a distinction between the “disclosing” and the “making known” is a good question, so that perhaps the second fuller expression is simply restating the first briefer expression {the Greek particle often is used in pairs, in constructions such as “not only/but also” or “both/and” or “as/so”, though no second particle is found in this case}; Cranfield sees three members of the series: kept secret for long ages, but now disclosed, and made known, specifically the fuller meaning of the Old Testament in light of the Gospel events {confer and compare Grothe, though even Grothe’s view Christ’s disclosing and the apostles’ making known does not seem completely consistent {perhaps confer Luther’s “question” about how something “could be hidden and yet known to the prophets and thus not only manifest now but also then”}}]; next in the Greek text is the prepositional phrase “through the writings prophetic”, which could be the Old Testament Scriptures and/or the New Testament Scriptures [*TLSB* oddly says both that “prophetic writings” are the Old Testament {with reference to 2 Peter 2:1-20-21} and that “The OT did not make all things clear. In the NT, the mystery is now revealed”; Roehrs-Franzmann calls the Old Testament “the interpretive witness to what the eternal God has revealed in Christ” {again confer Franzmann, on which they probably drew}; Grothe says “certainly” the Old Testament interpreted in light of Christ but also the New Testament]; next in the Greek text is the prepositional phrase that follows in the ESV text as it is laid out here) ... **according to the command of the eternal God**, (the Greek preposition translated “according to” was used twice in 16:25; the Greek word translated “command” is used only here in Romans and only five other times in the Greek New Testament; the Greek adjective translated “eternal” in this verse modifying God was also used in 16:25, where the ESV translated it “long” modifying “times”) ... **to bring about the obedience of faith**— (more-literally this next prepositional phrase, in the Greek text order, could be translated “to the obedience of faith”, though the literal “to” or “into” moves into the figurative purpose; “obedience of faith” [as Grothe puts it, “the obedience which

is faith”; confer most recently our discussion above at 16:19; also confer “obey the Gospel”, for example at 10:16] was explicit already in 1:5 connected to “all the nations” as here [or “Gentiles”], more obviously in the Greek text, where that prepositional phrase follows next [Sanday-Headlam says “to all the nations” probably goes with “for the obedience of faith” and not with “has been made known” {confer Cranfield, but compare Grothe, with reference to Luke 2:32, not that the prepositional phrase has to be so construed for Luke 2:32 to be true in and of itself; perhaps the placement is intentionally “ambiguous” so as to be taken with both the preceding and following elements}; “to all the nations” uses the same preposition “to” or “into”, appropriate for the “having been made known” participle that follows the prepositional phrase in the Greek text order; we remember that the demographic make-up of the Roman congregations was Jew and Gentile [*CSSB* says of “all nations”, “The universality of the gospel”; Rome has the Gospel but perhaps Spain does not? does Paul consider the Gospel to have reached the ends of the earth yet? could Christ return yet?]; making known is necessary for faith, but knowledge is distinguished from faith that trusts God for the forgiveness of sins for Jesus’s sake and so is forgiven, justified, declared and made righteous, the central focus of the letter) ... **V.27 to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.** (perhaps more-literally the Greek its order could be translated, “to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to Him the glory to the ages, amen”; 16:25 had begun with “to the One able to strengthen”, and that construction is completed in this verse [the eternal God had been mentioned explicitly in 16:26 in connection with His command, but He also arguably is the one doing all of the passive verbs—keeping secret, disclosing, making known]; Cranfield discusses but is not in favor of the idea that “only” and “wise” are to be taken independently [Grothe acknowledges the possibility and also clarifies that taking them together does not assert that there are other gods who are not wise but refers “to the only God, who is wise”; the “wise” is that which St. Paul wanted for the hearers back in 16:19 [*TLSB* comments, “God is all-knowing, but also all-wise in providing for our salvation”]; the preposition translated “through” could be “on account of” or “because of”, though the idea of our access to God or our coming to God through Jesus certainly is appropriate [Jesus was mentioned as the object/content of preaching in 16:25]; the relative pronoun “to Him” might be taken as referring to “Jesus Christ”, the closest matching noun [confer *TLSB*’s poorly phrased comment? confer Sanday-Headlam’s discussion but not its conclusion, but compare Grothe, who seems to take Jesus as included {no one mentions the lack of a reference to the Holy Spirit!}], but the larger construction arguably is driving at the Father [confer Cranfield, who sees the relative pronoun picking up the preceding thought before the immediately preceding prepositional phrase]; glory likely from St. Paul and all the hearers of the letter, though God has inherent glory apart from what we do; the ESV gives an optative “be”, but, as we discussed with 16:20b, there and here the predication without a verb indicating tense or mood is open to interpretation by the translator, and perhaps intentionally “ambiguous” past, present, and future [of course, God is outside of time] glory indicated and wished and, in some sense, commanded is in view [regarding glory to God, *CSSB* comments, “The ultimate

purpose of all things”]; the Greek phrase “to the ages” uses the Greek noun that is behind the Greek adjective translated “eternal” in 16:26 and “long” in 16:25; the Greek word order notably ends with “forever” as our usual Collect termination; the congregation’s “Amen” follows in this case from every faithful hearer or reader, “Yes, yes, it shall be so” to all that has been said and to the eternal glory of God) ...

### **Conclusion:**

- When we began this study of Romans on February 28, 2021, we intended it to go longer than what at the time was a usual 13-week quarterly course, even to go as long as in some sense was needed, though this study’s taking more than five years was perhaps not in view. (Notably, of the course’s 262 weeks posted on the website at this writing, some 48—nearly one year’s worth—notably were on other topics, and the Class was not held on a number of other Sundays for various reasons, including such things as a lack of students and a power outage.) At the outset we noted tensions in congregations over Sunday Adult Bible Classes on Biblical books or specified topics, over courses of a shorter or longer run, and of a slower and deeper or faster and shallower pace. I would say we went longer, slower, and deeper. You might add the adverb “too” in front of long, slow, and deep. Others may have appreciated and been happy with the length, pace, and depth. As I have said in other contexts, one never can please all of the people. I remind us all of Luther’s comment regarding Romans that “We can never read it or ponder over it too much; for the more we deal with it, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes” (AE 35:365).
- I know that at least I was blessed in my preparation for the course, though I would have liked to have had more time to synthesize my notes and reduce them and present them differently, perhaps more like we are using for our Midweek Bible Study “All the Prophets Testify”. To be sure, I have a greater appreciation for Romans’ overall structure and content, not to mention the challenge of delineating the structure and difficulty of explaining the content. By the work of the Holy Spirit, some specific passages became clearer to me over the course of our study, and, I am sure due to my fallen human nature, some passages surprisingly still remain somewhat enigmatic to me. I pray that participants who stayed with the study from beginning to end can say something similar.
- To be sure, what we need to know for salvation is clear in Holy Scripture in general and arguably also in Romans in particular. We all are in need of the righteousness of God that He freely gives us for Christ’s sake through faith in Him. That righteousness through faith is lived out and practiced in our various callings and ultimately vindicated on the Last Day. Whether or not St. Paul ever reached Spain, with or without the support of the Christians in Rome may be uncertain in our time, but we know that the Gospel about Christ’s righteousness, faithfully believed, taught, and confessed by St. Paul in this Epistle, by God’s providence, went well beyond the Christians in Rome, indeed, that it has come even to us in East Texas today. May that Gospel bear fruit in our lives and, with its peace and joy, comfort us now and forever.

## Selected Annotated Bibliography

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