

# Romans 16:19-20

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*Paul assures the believers in Rome that the report throughout the world is about their obedience and faith, but he still wants them to be wise. Paul gives them encouragement by saying that soon God will crush Satan.*

Paul just delivered a final warning to the believers in Rome to be wary of those who teach something different than the gospel. He immediately reassures the believers that he knows they have not been swayed by people like this: *For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil* (v 19).

We know from Chapter 1 of Romans that the Roman believers' "faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world" (Romans 1: 8). Paul is obviously thankful and pleased that their faith is spoken of throughout the world and wants them to stand firm in the one true gospel, the gospel based on God's grace (Romans 3:24).

The word Paul uses here for *innocent* is "akeraios" which means "simple" or "pure." In Romans 12, Paul described what an innocent believer who is living for God looks like:

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2)

Paul desires the believers to be completely set apart from the world, following God and not their appetites.

Paul ends his request for innocence with an encouragement: *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet* (v 20).

Eventually, Christ will return and Satan will be destroyed. God promised all the way back in Genesis that one day this would happen (Genesis 3:15). Satan is using the influence of false teachers to lead people astray, and this can be very discouraging.

However, one day Satan will be destroyed, and God will bring peace and justice. We read about the details of Satan's punishment in Revelation 20. Revelation 21:3–4 describes the peace God will bring:

"And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

What a joy to look forward to! Paul ends with another blessing of God's grace: *The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you* (v 20). This is the twenty-fourth occurrence of the word translated *grace* in this letter. Paul has defended the gospel of grace, has taught that God's grace overcomes all our faults (Romans 5:20), and now prays that God's *grace* be with the Romans in their daily walk.

*Grace* here translates the Greek word "charis" which speaks of God's favor. We see this in Luke 2:40, which speaks of Jesus growing in favor with both God and man. God's grace is freely given to all who believe (Romans 3:24). God grants His favor to reconcile all to Himself through the shed blood of Jesus.

But God grants His favor upon the behavior of His children based on the decisions they make, as in 1 Peter 5:5, which says God gives grace (favor) to the humble. None of us can appeal to any objective standard to say that God ought to grant us His favor, because God is above all standards, and is the standard. Therefore, it is always a matter of God's mercy that He grant His favor. So, it is altogether appropriate for Paul to pray that God's favor fall upon these Romans believers.

Paul prayed something similar for Onesiphorus, who ministered to Paul while in prison. Paul prays that God "grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day" (the judgement day). This also shows that it is always a matter of God's mercy to grant His favor.

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>19</sup> For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil. <sup>20</sup> The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.**

**The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.**