

“To Him be the Glory Forever”

“<sup>33</sup> Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! <sup>34</sup> For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? <sup>35</sup> Or who has first given to Him, that it would be paid back to him? <sup>36</sup> For from Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever.

Amen.” – Romans 11:33-36

We pick up at the end of Paul’s somewhat length-y section describing the partial setting aside of the nation of Israel. It is a fairly difficult portion of Romans to understand, so if you do not understand fully, do not fret and don’t be afraid to ask one of the leaders for some clarification. But what I will say about it, is we need to remember that this setting aside of Israel is three things:

It is **partial**. Not all Jewish people have been hardened. God always kept for Himself a remnant of Jewish believers and there are still some Jews who believe in the one true Gospel.

It is **purposeful**. God has a purpose for everything that He does. In this case, the setting aside of Israel and the bringing in of the gentiles was to spark a jealousy in the hearts of the Jews that would result in a conversion for some, or a further hardening for others.

It is **passing**. It is temporary. God has not forgotten Israel. They will be grafted back in, as Paul describes it. But don’t get too hung up on the olive tree analogy if it seems a little hard to understand. Just know that when the fullness of the Gentiles has come to salvation, as it says in verse 25, then the promise to Israel will be fulfilled and they will be restored.

With that, let us get to what we are here to learn about tonight. The last four verses of chapter 11. That’s right folks, we are finishing chapter eleven today. But don’t get too excited because we are only going to do one verse next week.

I digress. Let us take a look at these four insanely God glorifying verses:

“<sup>33</sup> Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! <sup>34</sup> For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? <sup>35</sup> Or who has first given to Him, that it would be paid back to him? <sup>36</sup> For from Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever.

Amen.” – Romans 11:33-36

First off, who knows what this portion of scripture, these last four verses of chapter 11, is referred to as?

So then, what is a doxology?

Is it simply a few nice things to say about God?

No. It is an outpouring of gratitude and praise to God because you are realizing how awesome He is and how deserving of praise He is.

It is an involuntary response to the graces of God that often concludes a prayer or a hymn or in this case, a portion of scripture that lays out the beautiful workings of God's sovereignty.

Verse one; and by one, I mean verse 33:

"Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!" – Romans 11:33

So, in Sunday School we have talked about most of the attributes Paul mentions here.

We have discussed the Wisdom of God, the omniscience of God, the infinitude of God, His justice, goodness, mercy, and His incomprehensibility.

So, we can understand why Paul is praising God here; we are able to communicate some of what we know about God.

But there are some things about Him that we just simply cannot understand. Paul says, His ways are "unfathomable."

Who knows what a fathom is? A fathom is six feet. It is a unit of measurement often used in the nautical world to determine how deep of water you are in.

So, in the context of God's ways being unfathomable, it means that we literally have no way of measuring them out.

Our knowledge of what is in the ocean is limited to the shallows, just like our knowledge of God is limited to what He has revealed to us in His Word.

It is beyond our capacity, impossible even, for us to understand the ways of God. We cannot even fathom what lies in the depths of our own oceans, so how are we supposed to comprehend the workings of God?

The ways in which God chooses to accomplish his purposes are beyond our understanding. Not to mention the purposes themselves are beyond our comprehension.

We may not always know what God has planned for our own lives, but you can know for certain that whatever He has planned for you, will prove to bring Him glory. For that is the chief end of man, is it not? To glorify God.

Before anything existed, except for God of course, He concocted a plan that consisted of everything from the creation of the universe, to the fall of mankind in the garden, to the death of His Son on the cross, to the eventual return of Christ.

God did not just do this on a whim. He did this because by creating the world in this way and by allowing us to be saved in this way, He is able to receive the most glory. God gets all the glories.

So, in verse 33 Paul is giving us a brief glimpse of the majesty of the Lord almighty.

Verse 34:

“For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor?”

Isaiah 40:13-14:

**“<sup>13</sup> Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord,  
Or as His counselor has informed Him?**

<sup>14</sup> With whom did He consult and *who* gave Him understanding?  
And *who* taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge,  
And informed Him of the way of understanding?”

Verse 35:

“Or who has first given to Him, that it would be paid back to him?”

Job 41:11

**“Who has been first to give to Me, that I should repay him?  
Whatever is under the entire heaven is Mine.”**

Verse 34 is emphasizing the fact that God is unsearchable, unfathomable, and all knowing. No one can know the mind of the Lord. *Finitum non capax infinitum*: “the finite cannot grasp the fullness of the finite.” (Luther)

And no one can add to the knowledge of the God. He alone knows everything past, present, and future. No one can “counsel” Him or “inform” Him of anything that He does not already know.

Verse 35 is making it very clear that everything in the universe is His and He has total control over the entirety of it.

God is not obligated to give, or do anything for us. We exist for Him, not the other way around.

God does whatever He wants, and what He wants is for us to glorify Him. Not because He needs it, but because He wants us to enjoy Him because of the love that He has for us.

John 17:23 says that God loves us in the same way that He loves Jesus! Think about that for a second folks, that is a whole lot of love...

We have no right to salvation; to be chosen by God is not a right, it is an absolute privilege. Once you come to the realization of how significant it is to be chosen by God, you will never look at the world in the same way.

To be chosen by God is LITERALLY, the only thing that matters.

To sum up those two verses:

v. 34

We cannot comprehend the full knowledge of God.

God cannot and will never learn anything for He already obtains all knowledge.

And v. 35, everything that exists is God's so He therefore owes us nothing and everything we receive from Him is a merciful gift that we must glorify Him for.

Verse 36:

"For from Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen."

Beloved, why should we give glory to God?

You are sensible people, take a look at the first half of this verse, the answer lies therein:

All things are what?

FROM God, THROUGH God, and TO God.

All things are from Him. Without Him, nothing was made that has been made (John 1:3).

God, the uncaused First Cause, must exist and be the Creator of all things.

Everything in existence, past, present, and future, was made by God, through His power, in order to bring glory to Him. Including us.

We are from Him, and through Him, and are created to give glory to Him. Not only that, but our **salvation** comes from Him, our **salvation** comes through Him, and of course, beloved, our salvation ultimately gives glory to Him.

With that, let's talk for a second about God's glory. There are two ways to talk about God's glory:

He has intrinsic glory and ascribed glory.

His intrinsic glory is the sum total of the greatness of His divine being. It is all that God is; the whole of all of His attributes.

This glory inherently belongs to Him because of His holy character.

His intrinsic glory exists within Himself, so we cannot give intrinsic glory to God, but we can **ascribe** glory to Him. The question we need to ask ourselves is DO we ascribe glory to God? How do we even go about giving ascribing glory to Him?

Ascribing glory to Him can be done in various ways:

We can offer sacrifices to Him, not animal sacrifices as they did in the OT, but offering **ourselves** as **living** sacrifices, which we'll learn about next week when we start chapter 12.

We ascribe glory to God by thanking Him for His goodness, which reminds those around us that He is the source of all good things, and they too in turn may ascribe Him glory.

We ascribe glory to the Lord when we proclaim His sovereignty and live like we mean it. Striving every day to become more and more like Christ in our thoughts, words, and deeds.

And of course, we ascribe glory to the Lord in our worship and fear of Him.

We worship that which we believe is greater than we are, and by worshiping the one true God, we acknowledge His unfathomable greatness.

We must, therefore, worship God in the spirit of truth, the truth that is found in His word.

So that's the why and how to give glory to God.

When should we give glory to Him? Forever (literally, into the ends of eternity).

Romans 16:27 Gal 1:3 Eph 3:21 Phil 4:20 2 Tim 4:18 Heb 13:21 1 Peter 5:11 2 Pet 3:18 Jude 25

“to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.” – Romans 16:27

“to whom *be* the glory forevermore.” – Galatians 1:5

“to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever.” – Ephesians 3:21

“Now to our God and Father *be* the glory forever and ever.” – Philippians 4:20

“The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him *be* the glory forever and ever.” – 2 Timothy 4:18

“through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* the glory forever and ever.” – Hebrews 13:21

“To Him *be* dominion forever and ever.” – 1 Peter 5:11

“but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity.” 2 Peter 3:18

“to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *be* glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever. Amen.” – Jude 25

Are you getting it???

We must worship Him now and forever. Right now, is simply just a warmup for forever.

Now to the last word of this verse. Amen, or surely it is true: truly truly.

Paul punctuates 1-11 with a **passionate** amen. He is saying amen to the entirety of the previous eleven chapters.

Starting with the depravity of man emphasizing our hopelessness of saving ourselves.

He then talks about justification by faith alone which leads to our sanctification, or our growth in Christ that begins to happen immediately after being justified.

Then, after discussing the providence of God over all things, he discusses the doctrine of election.

He then discusses our duty to send people out to preach the gospel so that it may be heard by all people.

And of course, the role of ethnic Israel in God's ultimate plan of redemption that we are concluding here in chapter 11.

Paul, here, is saying a sincerely heartfelt "amen" to all of that.

It is easy to say amen to justification by faith alone and that the Spirit of God indwells those who are justified. Or sovereign election and the security of our salvation.

It is easy to say amen to the fact that God, being a potter, creates vessels for glory, but it is harder to say amen to the fact that He creates some vessels for destruction.

In the case of the elect, the love, mercy, and grace of God are abundantly displayed.

In the case of the lost, the patience, power, and wrath of God are equally lifted up.

Salvation is for God's glory and He is glorified in each case. We must therefore, say "amen" to all that the Lord has ordained.

Conclusion...