CALVARY CHAPEL
MARTIN COUNTY

The Grace and Mercy of God
Pulling Together Everything for the One Who Made it All!
Romans 11:25-36

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As a former Pharisee, Paul was a professional law keeper and a serious devoted Jew. He has also shared with us the ongoing issues he was having with sin at the same time, prior to his meeting Jesus. He expressed his angst for us earlier in Romans 7 as well as what his meeting and totally surrendering to Jesus Christ did for him.

Romans 7:24–8:1
“Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on

the other, with my flesh the law of sin. Therefore there is now no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ Jesus." (NASB 2020)

Since then, as a Messianic believer, he has wondered why the rest of the Jews have not come to Christ. Even as he began ministering, he would go to the synagogues first, but the rejection was there and it was becoming firmer.

Internally he was asking the question why the rejection of their own Messiah? And over time, the Lord provided him the answer which we saw him reveal to us last time.

Romans 11:25–27
"For I do not want you, brothers and sisters, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that **a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written: "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." "THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS**."" (NASB 2020)

The calling out of the Gentiles began with the realization of Peter and his report (Acts 15) of what the Lord had done in his ministry and what the Lord was now doing in Philip, Paul, Barnabas and others.

God was calling out Gentiles to follow Him, and they were following Christ in ever growing numbers, which of course was causing serious jealousy with the Jews, as seen by Paul, more than once.
This calling out of the Gentiles will continue until the fullness of the Gentiles, meaning all who are to be part of the church become part of the church, that final number is reached. Meanwhile there is also a remnant of Israel being saved, but the marker here that Paul uses is the Gentiles.

Judicial blindness and hardening of Israel has been in place since the rejection of their own Messiah and it will continue until the church is taken up in the pre-tribulation rapture.

That is when the church age ends, and God once again turns His attention to the Jewish nation. Ever since Messiah was cut off, as Daniel stated would be the case in Daniel 9:26, the final seventy weeks of years which had been decreed for the nation has been on hold with one week remaining.

The final week of seven years will begin once there is a treaty signed between the antichrist and the nation. Just as Daniel said would be the case in Daniel 9:27.

We are now in the interim period, the church age which Paul states to the Ephesian church, was a mystery that he was privileged to reveal.

Ephesians 3:1–13
"When I think of all this, I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the benefit of you Gentiles … assuming, by the way, that you know **God gave me the special responsibility of extending his grace to you Gentiles**. As I briefly wrote earlier, God himself revealed his mysterious plan to me. As you read what I have written, you will understand my insight into this plan regarding Christ. **God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now by his Spirit he has revealed it to his holy apostles and prophets. And this is God's plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus. By God's grace and mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News**. Though I am the least deserving of all God's people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ. **I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning. God's purpose in all this was to use the**

church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord. Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence. So please don't lose heart because of my trials here. I am suffering for you, so you should feel honored." (NLT)

The word Paul uses here in Ephesians as well as in Romans is μυστήριον (musterion).

I agree with Dr. McGee that the use of the word mystery needs a bit of explanation here. "In the ancient world of Paul's day there were mystery religions. Today it applies in a popular way to a story that has an unrevealed plot or person. It is used in Scripture in neither of these ways. In the New Testament the word is used to refer to that which had been concealed but is now revealed. The mystery here is the identification of the fulness of the Gentiles, which was not a subject of revelation in the Old Testament. (McGee 1997, 725)

This is a term that Paul uses and when he does, he is saying this is something that is now revealed that had been concealed in the Old Testament. Dr. Fruchtenbaum expands on the Greek word. In New Testament Greek, the meaning is both technical and simple: It refers to something that was totally unrevealed in the Old Testament, and only revealed in the New Testament. For something to qualify as a New Testament mystery, it must be something totally unrevealed anywhere in the Old Testament. If it is knowable from the Old Testament, it is not a mystery. A mystery, then, is something only knowable from the New Testament. (Fruchtenbaul 2003, 651)

The church age was not something that was seen by the prophets. It was unknown to them as was the situation Israel now finds itself in.

Biblically speaking, all a mystery.

And, as we discussed at length last time, where Paul says all Israel will be saved, he is speaking about the remnant. The message here from Paul, by his quoting Isaiah 59:20, is that to be part of that remnant, the individual will have to turn from transgression, repent in other words.

Isaiah 59:20
""The Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," Says the LORD." (NKJV)

There has always been a remnant of varying sizes throughout the history of Israel. Even in the past two thousand years, there has been a remnant. There will also be a remnant during the Great Tribulation as they are the ones who will ask for their Messiah to come and save them (Zechariah 13:9).

Knowing that, there is the reality of the current day that Paul is now preparing to address and it is a reality that he has dealt with at a very personal level more than once and will deal with yet in the near future as he makes his way to Jerusalem and is arrested due to the Jewish leadership in the Temple. The mystery is indeed part of God's plan, and so is what Paul will outline.

Romans 11:28–29
"In relation to the gospel they are enemies on your account, but in relation to God's choice they are beloved on account of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." (NASB 2020)

There is no connector here in the Greek to the previous thoughts Paul has expressed. This is a break in his argument.

What Paul is now reflecting is the current sad reality. When he says, “they are enemies of the gospel,” he is summarizing what he has already discussed, that is their clear failure to respond to the revelation of God’s righteousness revealed in their Messiah, Jesus Christ.

The nation turned towards religion, towards works believing they could earn righteousness or that they were entitled to it since they are Jewish. And because of that, because they did not pursue by faith, they did not obtain it.

Meanwhile, the Gentiles, who were not looking for it at all, have had God reveal Himself to them through Jesus Christ and they have, by faith, obtained what the Jews thought they were the only ones entitled to have (Romans 9:30-10:21).

Because of this, the standard by which they can be judged to be “enemies” is the gospel of Jesus Christ which they have rejected. And the really amazing thing is there are some of the nation of Israel as well as the Jews today, who do indeed consider Gentile followers of their own Messiah to be enemies. This is seen in some of the legal issues Messianic Jews may encounter if they decide to make Aliyah and move to Israel.

Joshua Pex, an attorney in Israel, writes the following. “It should be emphasized that the Ministry of Interior is particularly suspicious of Christians and Messianic Jews in relation to aliyah to Israel. It is therefore recommended to receive legal council prior to starting such a process. Regardless of the legally grey zone surrounding these issues, a person actively engaging in missionary activity in Israel, will almost certainly be denied the right to aliyah. This is because Christian proselytizing is illegal and considered to be going against the purpose of the Law of Return.

In accordance with the Law of Return, any Jewish person (or descendant of a Jewish person up until the third generation) in entitled to obtain the status of an ‘ole‘ (new immigrant) in Israel, as long as they did not convert to another religion. In general, the State of Israel considers Messianic Jews to be Christians, and any Jew that joined the Messianic stream of Judaism as a convert to Christianity. Thus, aliyah to Israel for a Jew that converted to Christianity is very difficult. That said, there is no legal prohibition for a person that is not Jewish according to Jewish Law (does not have a Jewish mother) to make aliyah. This applies even if they are part of another religion, as long as they did not convert. This applies also to Messianic Jews whose mother converted to Christianity before they were born.” (Pex 2026)

Is witnessing or evangelizing illegal in Israel? Wish Wesfold answers that legal question. “Evangelizing in Israel is not illegal in all forms, but it becomes a criminal offense when it involves offering material benefits to induce someone to change their religion. Verbal sharing of faith, personal testimony, and general religious conversation are not criminalized under Israeli law.

The critical word is “inducement.” Israel’s law targets coercive or transactional conversion attempts, not sincere religious dialogue. A Christian who tells a Jewish Israeli about their faith over coffee is not committing a crime. A missionary who offers money, gifts, or other benefits in exchange for someone attending a church or converting crosses into criminal territory.” (Wesfold 2026)

I am sharing this to point out, that the issue Paul identified almost 2,000 years ago, is still an issue today. But Paul also points out another reality that cannot be ignored, no matter how much antisemitic churches want to.

Romans 11:28–29
“In relation to the gospel they are enemies on your account, **but in relation to God’s choice they are beloved on account of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable**.” (NASB 2020)

They are still god's chosen people, although currently in unbelief, they still are His. Many nations of the world choose to ignore that fact, as well as some in this nation. God made a promise to Abram thousands of years ago that is still applicable today.

Genesis 12:3
"**And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed**."" (NASB 2020)

Obviously, the fact that Jesus Christ was born of a Jewish virgin of the tribe of Judah fulfilled the prophecy embedded here of "in you all the families of earth will be blessed."

In Acts 3, as Bruce Fisk notes, "Peter explicitly linked the Abrahamic blessing of Genesis to Jesus's resurrection." (Fisk 2023, 149)

As it pertains to the blessings and the curses, William Koenig has and continues to track current events in the light of Genesis 12:3.

He has made some interesting observations as a result.

The Middle East peace process has not brought peace to Israel or the world, but it has empowered the terrorists and terrorist organizations that operate within the Muslim nations that border Israel, live within Israel, occupy the Middle East, and live within nations around the world. Israel's problems are now the world's problems. Israel's security concerns are now the world's security concerns. Israel's border problems are now the world's border problems as radical Islam is striking nations throughout the world. This is a judgment against the nations who have pressured Israel into a flawed peace process and empowered radical Islam. The nations of the world are living under the curse spoken of in Genesis 12:3. (Koenig 2006, Kindle Location 666)

No matter how hard and resistant they may be to your sharing your faith with them, remember, they are still His people.

And then we come to verse 29, after telling us that the Jewish people are still God's people even though predominately in unbelief, the question would be why. Paul says, because God doesn't change His mind. He says, "the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."

The word translated irrevocable is ἀμεταμέλητα (ametamelita). The word means "not to be regretted, without regret." (Arndt, et al. 2000, 53)

Is God talking about the entire nation of Israel here or is He only talking about those who believe, again, the remnant. What Paul is saying is that God does not regret calling Israel into being. God has not thrown them away and replaced them with Gentile Christians and a remnant of Messianic Jews. David Garland reminds us that God is God and His reactions are not mirrors of our own.

Humans might renege on their promises when events take a turn for the worse. God's faithfulness to the covenant, however, surmounts the snag of Israel's unfaithfulness. This affirmation of God's righteous character repeats the theme that runs through the letter. God's covenant with Israel remains binding despite Israel's continual violation of it. (Garland 2021, 371)

God does not go back on His gifts or His call, ever.

Numbers 23:19
“God is not a man, that He would lie, Nor a son of man, that He would change His mind; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?” (NASB 2020)

Israel, in spite of their failures, and by the way we also fail, is still loved by God. In spite of their rejection of Christ, God still loves His people.

In spite of our rebellion and rejection of God and His Son, He still loved us and Jesus still died on the cross fo us as well. We are once again learning another aspect about the grace of God and His mercy and how that all works.

Romans 5:6–8
“For **while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly**. For one will hardly die for a righteous person; though perhaps for the good person someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (NASB 2020)

Grant Osborne provides a bit more for us here. “This does not mean God will never reject those who have turned against him. In verse 28 Paul refers to individuals who have become his enemies. His call is corporate; he will remain faithful to the nation. His judgment and rejection are reserved for individuals. He is faithful to the nation even though he has to condemn many within it. (Osborne 2017, 367)

He has also remained faithful to us. He saved us and knowing that He is still faithful to an unfaithful nation, calling out of it those who will be saved, should encourage us. It tells us that He will remain faithful to us even when we blow it and stray away.

Philippians 1:6
“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work among you will complete it by the day of Christ Jesus.” (NASB 2020)

Romans 11:30–32
“For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. For God has shut up all in disobedience, so that He may show mercy to all.” (NASB 2020)

To make certain that they heard what he said in verses 11-15, Paul here restates it for the Roman church and for us. And with it comes the reminder that none of us are worthy of the grace and mercy of God. We all deserve judgment, not mercy yet He chooses to show mercy and grace.

Talking directly to the Gentile believers there in Rome, Paul reminds them who they were before Jesus. We need to be reminded of that as well. First we must realize that prior to coming to Jesus, we were disobedient to the God who created us. We were alienated from Him and did nothing to please Him. Paul also said the same thing to the Colossian church.

Colossians 1:21–23
“**And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him**, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.” (ESV)

Paul tells the church in Rome, that they have been given mercy, because of the disobedience of those who were initially privileged to be His people, but God has used their disobedience to save the Gentiles. And now, because of the mercy He has shown to the Gentiles, His intent is to make the Jewish people jealous and seek to have what the Gentiles now have.

Based on what we read earlier in Romans 1, none of us were born on this planet looking for the Lord. We were born as sinners and grew up indulging in all that term means, We deserved judgment, not mercy. But thanks to what Jesus Christ did on the cross, we are now the recipients of His grace and mercy.

As we saw earlier, Paul considered this to be something that was not discussed earlier in the Old Testament thus the term he assigns to this new phase of salvation history, that Gentiles are recipients of God's grace and mercy, to be a mystery.

How did Paul come into this mission where he is now being considered to be the apostle to the Gentile world? He did not start off looking for it.

He was a hunter/killer of Messianic Jews, until confronted personally by Jesus Christ. Paul told us that there was something Jesus told Him at that point that at first he did not accept.

Acts 26:17–18
“I will rescue you from your own people and from **the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you to open their eyes so that they turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in me**.’” (NET 2nd ed.)

A few days later, Ananias confirmed this to Paul.

Acts 9:15–18
“But the Lord said to him, “Go, because this man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before Gentiles and kings and the people of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” So Ananias departed and entered the house, placed his hands on Saul and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came here, has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized,” (NET 2nd ed.)

Paul eventually returned to Jerusalem and was praying there in the Temple when God showed Him a third time, his mission.

Acts 22:17–21
“When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw the Lord saying to me, ‘Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’ I replied, ‘Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat those in the various synagogues who believed in you. And when the blood of your witness Stephen was shed, I myself was standing nearby, approving, and guarding the cloaks of those who were killing him.’ **Then he said to me, ‘Go, because I will send you far away to the Gentiles**.’ ”” (NET 2nd ed.)

Paul had a serious struggle personally to understand what God is now having him teach. God is not done with His people the Jews. They are still his people, and there will be those who are saved, but for the most part, until the church age ends, they are blinded to the gospel. There will still be those who are saved, but not all.

Now, as part of the new covenant, God is showing mercy to the Gentile nations. Again, it was Jewish disobedience and unbelief that led to this moment.

Romans 11:32
“For God has shut up all in disobedience, so that He may show mercy to all.” (NASB 2020)

Back in Genesis 3, at the fall, man died spiritually and that link to God went away. At that point, mankind was separated from God and all would be, as it were, in a dungeon called disobedience. Jesus Christ has now shown up at that dungeon and He has paid the price to obtain the keys. His blood has purchased us from that dungeon and all we must do is believe that what He did is sufficient to set us free and to be free forever. When we believe, we are removed from that dungeon never to return. That is God’s mercy.

He is continuing to show mercy to all who are in that dungeon right now and all they have to do is believe as well. Most do not.

Verse 32 is not a promise that at the end of the age, we all win. In order to come to that conclusion, you would have to ignore everything we have studied in Romans up to this point. This applies to both Gentiles and to Jews. There is no free pass.

The principle that God saves anyone is by His grace and mercy. We are all saved the same way.

Ephesians 2:8–9
“**For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not a result of works, so that no one may boast**.” (NASB 2020)

There are those who get really hung up on the fact that God has chosen the Jews as His people, yet not all of them will be saved but just a remnant, as we have already discussed. There are also those who are equally incredulous that it was the disobedience of His own chosen people that resulted in salvation being offered to the Gentiles.

The struggle appears to be between corporate responsibility versus individual responsibility. Let me use an example which will indeed fall short. Let’s say that right now, as baseball season has concluded, you had selected this time last year, that Milwaukee would win the world series. You have selected the team and during the season different people rolled in and out of the team for various reasons. Some for-performance issues, others just were not good enough.

Here we are now at the end of the season and yes, the team selected has won but those who were on the team at the beginning of the season may not necessarily be the same who are on it at the end of the season. Not everyone made it. We are used to that when it comes to athletic teams.

God selected Abram to be the father of a new people that He was calling out for Himself, the Jews. Many were loyal and faithful to YAHWEH, and many were not. Just because there were those who were not, did not change God’s selection of them. Not all of them realized that Jesus was their Messiah. That didn’t change God’s selection either.

Will the entire corporate entity known as Israel be saved? No. Will the entire corporate entity known as the Gentiles be saved, no there too.

What is worse is that the Jews have a unique ethnic heritage with common ancestry making them a nation, yet not all of them will believe. But the Gentiles, who are essentially all individuals from many different nations, as they are saved, become a unique entity, a unique nation that we call the Body of Christ or the Church and those Jews who believe are also part of the unique new group now as well.

Will there be those individuals who are members of those two groups, who have seen and recognized the truth and believed? Yes.

But that is not all. We must let God be God.

Paul would have been the first to tell you this makes no sense yet to God, it is His plan and yes, Israel is now in the land but in unbelief. They will indeed be restored and in belief by the time Jesus Christ returns a second time. Dr. McGee takes us a little further on this topic.

What is the reason that the nation Israel will be restored? Well, that is locked in the riches of the wisdom of God. My friend, let's rest on the fact that what God is doing is wise, it is right, and it is the best that can be done. You and I have an old nature that questions God when He makes a decision. I have heard many Christians say, "Why are the heathen lost when they haven't heard the gospel? God has no right to condemn them!" My friend, God has every right imaginable. He is God. And what He is doing is right. If you don't think it is right, your thinking is wrong. And if you don't think He is being smart, you are wrong. God is not stupid. You and I may be stupid, but God is not. (McGee 1997, 726)

Paul turns to this idea as his support as well for what he has just taught.

Romans 11:33–36
"**Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!** For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM, THAT IT WOULD BE PAID BACK TO HIM? For from Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." (NASB 2020)

Verse 33 is one of those verses that I turn to when I have no clue why God is doing something that from my finite minds perspective makes no sense at all. Let me start with one I am still working on.

Why did God choose to have one family build a large barge over the course of 120 years in order to save His creation from the flood? Why not just zap them into some protected environment and then zap them back?

God chooses to have us serve Him and accomplish His will in this world. Moses was in a great place there in the palace in Egypt, but there, he was unusable. Sam Gordon tells us that "Moses discovered, however, that there are certain life-building lessons that cannot be learned in a palace. Some can only be learned in a desert. With that in mind, he spent forty years in the back of beyond looking after a flock of sheep before God used him to lead the fledgling nation of Israel out of the land of Egypt. Those were days of preparation when God was moulding and shaping the life of his servant. (Gordon 2004, 88)

God, in His infinite wisdom, has chosen to use you and me to achieve His purpose of making disciples here on planet earth. We are integral to His plan to reach the world for Jesus Christ and there is no plan B.

It is our choice as followers of Jesus whether we accept that and press on, or not.

Does that make sense? Not always. The truth of matters such as we have been reading and studying here in Romans is possible only because of the Holy Spirit in us teaching us all things. What about the wisdom and knowledge of God?

These are both attributes that describe for us who God is and what He is like. Dabney tried to explain this to us 150 years ago. "Wisdom and knowledge are the attributes which characterize God as pure mind, as

a being of infinite and essential intelligence. That God's knowledge is vast, we argued from His spirituality, from His creation of other minds; (Ps. 94:7–10,) from His work of creation in general, from His omnipresence; (Ps. 139:1–12,) and from His other perfections of power, and (especially) of goodness, truth and righteousness, to the exercise of which knowledge is constantly essential. Of His wisdom, the great natural proof is the wonderful, manifold and beneficent contrivances in His works of creation (Ps. 136:24,) and providence. That God's knowledge is distinct, and in every case intuitive, never deductive, seems to flow from its perfection. We only know substances by their attributes; God must know them in their true substance: because it was His creative wisdom which clothed each substance with its essential qualities. We only learn many things by inference from other things; God knows all things intuitively; because there can be no succession in His knowledge, admitting of the relation of premise and conclusion." (Dabney 1878, 154-155)

Then we come to His unsearchable judgments and unfathomable ways. Let's look at judgements first. The reality is this, God is judge. He has given the job of judging humanity to Jesus Christ which Paul already discussed earlier in Romans 2.

No one wants to talk about Him as judge, they prefer to talk about His love, but His love means He will also judge. If you spend time studying the scriptures, that is a major theme in the Old Testament. And there are some who say that in the New Testament it is all about His love. Yet we still see this show up as Paul writes to his protégé Timothy about the need to remain faithful in teaching the word.

2 Timothy 4:1–4
"I charge you in the presence of God and of **Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead**, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths." (ESV)

Jesus is our Savior, but He is also the judge. Those who do not know Him will encounter Him as judge at the Great White Throne.

And for those who think they can know God's ways.

Isaiah 55:8–9
"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (ESV)

God is infinite and in one sense, we simply do not get it…at all. How can those of us with a distinctive start date even understand the idea of someone who has always existed much less pretend that we can know His thoughts. But here is the catch, because of Jesus, we can know Him (John 14:8-11).

MacLaren reflect how, without the Spirit, this is impossible. "The things that God thinks and purposes are not the things that man thinks and purposes, and therefore, because the thoughts are different, the outcomes of them in deeds are divergent. God's 'ways' are His acts, the manner and course of His working considered as a path on which He moves, and on which, in some sense, we can also journey. Our 'ways'—our manner of life—are not parallel with His, as they should be." (MacLaren 2009, 153)

This is exactly why Paul asks three questions framed from Isaiah 40 and Job 41. Who has known the mind of God? Who has counseled God? Or who has paid God and is now owed a debt from God? All three of these are indeed rhetorical and the expected answer is "no one." That would indeed be the

answer from a finite human perspective. As it pertains to the first question though, Jesus Christ knows the mind of God as does the Holy Spirit.

No one is ahead of God in giving. No one and as a result no one has a debt that God owes them. How do we experience the depth of the riches of all those things that are God? Through God's grace is the only way.

In our self, we cannot even come close to understanding the things that Paul has discussed with us, but with the Holy Spirit in us, as we rely on Him to show us, then we can indeed begin to experience all that His plan communicates to us.

Romans 11:36
"**For from Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things**. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." (NASB 2020)

Paul concludes this portion of Romans with a creation statement. God is the Originator, the Sustainer, and the Goal of all of creation. Paul provided a more detailed version of this in Colossians.

Colossians 1:15–20
"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. **For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.** And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. **For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross**." (ESV)

Why are we as humans, wired for eternity yet stuck in a finite world. Sin would be the easy answer. God created us for Himself. But with the fall, man decided he could replace God with himself and that has been a problem ever since. Solomon saw this and made a specific comment about the disconnect that exists as we run from God.

Ecclesiastes 3:11
"He has made everything suited to its time; also, he has given human beings an awareness of eternity; but in such a way that they can't fully comprehend, from beginning to end, the things God does." (CJB)

Yes, until we come to Jesus Christ, there is a hole that we look for things to fill it with. But that hole in us is of our own making and is only solved by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. By faith, we then realize that He is our creator and He is who we exist for. To please Him and to serve Him. Without Jesus, the idea of God being the Originator, the Sustainer, and the Goal of all of creation is totally foreign.

I agree with Sam Storms as to where this leaves us, before Jesus. "God has placed it within us to see the whole, to trace the hand of providence from beginning to end and to understand the sense of the parts as they fit into the complete picture. This is part of the image of God in us. There is a God-implanted, deep-seated drive and compulsive desire to grasp the strategy of heaven. We wonder about our destiny, the fate of others, where life is leading." But without Jesus, we look in all of the wrong places for that answer. Even as followers of Jesus we may not ever perceive all of the answers, but we rest in the one we have placed our trust knowing that at a point in time in the future, we will know. (Storms 2016, Ec 3:11-15)

1 Corinthians 13:12
"For now we see obscurely in a mirror, but then it will be face to face. **Now I know partly; then I will know fully, just as God has fully known me**." (CJB)

1 John 3:2
“Dear friends, we are God’s children now; and it has not yet been made clear what we will become. **We do know that when he appears, we will be like him; because we will see him as he really is**.” (CJB)

To Him be the glory indeed.

Romans 3:21–24
“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13
“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC’s of Salvation

A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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