

THE BOOK OF ROMANS
"The Indestructible Nation – Praised"
Romans 11:33-36

Review

1. The Book of Romans traces the mercy and grace of God. Initially it is for all (1:1-8:39), then it is gloriously seen toward Israel (9:1-11:36).

2. But there is the immediate context as well, noting God's covenant with Israel (vv. 27-29). Paul shows God's mercy toward Gentiles (v. 30), Israel (v. 31), and the world (v. 32).

3. In response to the manifestation of God's mercy (in the wider and more local contexts) an apostolic benediction is raised. What a burst of rapturous utterances concerning the Lord are here recorded. To get attention and make his exclamation, Paul is inspired by the Spirit, to say "O" (Greek letter Omega Ω).

4. So the closing verses of this incredible chapter defending God' s indestructible nation, consider these amazing thoughts about God:

1. FULLNESS of God v. 33

a. Its Depth (βάθος bathos) speaks of what is inexhaustible. This is the language of admiration which one cannot see. It expresses fullness rather than an unfathomable mystery. There is no bottom to His being!

Now follow three genitival words which may be coordinate:

1) Depth of Riches

This is to be taken absolutely. It therefore refers to all, not only His grace nor of any other single thing. The fact is, God is totally and utterly inexpressibly rich.

2) Depth of Wisdom

God' s wisdom is inexhaustible. He is wise to order all means to proper ends. Everything gives evidence of His wisdom. There are no restrictions to His wise decisions!

3) Depth of Knowledge

Some reject His omniscience, but Scripture teaches that God knows all things perfectly in every possible relationship (cf. Ps 139 to view God' s knowledge (vv. 46)), God' s presence (vv. 7-12), and God' s transcendence of power (vv. 13-16).

b. Its Height

While there is no coordinate for "height," the idea is latent in the text with two verbal adjectives and nouns:

1) Height of Judgments

His judgments are unsearchable (ἀνεξερευνήτα anexereuneta). All efforts fail to exhaust them. Human wisdom cannot understand them and pronounce them fully (1 Cor. 2:14). Judgments are the product of His wisdom and should provoke reverence and worship.

2) Height of Ways

The verbal adjective here (ἀνεξιχνίαστοι anexichniastoi) means God' s way are untrackable (cf. Eph. 3:8; LXX Job 5:9; 9:10; 34:24). God' s ways are untrackable for any mind or heart (Isa. 55:8, 9). In short, He is infinite; we are finite.

2. QUESTIONS about God v. 34, 35

Here is a series of rhetorical questions raised by Paul' s wonder and amazement about God' s mercy.

a. The Mind of God v. 34

Here is a quote from the O.T. (Isa. 40:13). It is chiasmically connected with the previous verse. The verb is a timeless aorist – did know, does know, will know. Obviously none qualifies. His mind is inexhaustible. So let it be!

b. The Counsel of God v. 34

The verb "has been" means "has become" (ἐγένετο egeneto) (cf. Jn 1:14). He is never taken by surprise. He has consulted no one in forming His decisions (cf. Isa. 28:29). Remember, one of Messiah' s names is "Wonderful Counselor" (Isa. 9:6). Man is infinitely below God. None equals Him (cf. Isa. 45:5, 6, 14, 18, 21).

c. The Gifts of God v. 35

The quotation here is from Job 35:7; 41:4. The initiative is always with God and then man responds. This question enlarges on "riches" (v. 33). No one ever gives to God. No one ever receives God' s favor as a payment for something done. He needs no recompense for what He gives.

3. WORSHIP of God v. 36

Surely this verse gives the answer as to why God needs no recompense. It summarizes and avers: Let God be God (Isa. 46:10). Notice that all things are:

a. Of God

The preposition (ἐξ ex) shows that He is at once Source, Author, Creator – everything. All things exist because of Him. Glory!

b. Through God

The preposition (διά dia) states that He is Means, Presenter, Governor, and bountiful Benefactor. There is no "mother nature." For it is God Who created nature, controls it, and directs it. He is the mediator of all creation.

c. To God

The preposition (εἰς eis) points to the final goal of all created things and people. God is the End, Object, and Goal of everything. There can be no possibility of His indebtedness to man (Ps 50:12).

Conclusion

The final ascription of glory as described here is befitting to God for "all things." This is not all things in general, but all things which exist as the definite article affirms. Think of giving Him this glory "for ever." That is an eternal retirement assignment! All things, all incidents are filled with good.

NOTE: 1. God' s covenant with Abraham embraces His natural seed and is perpetually valid. 2. Paul keeps a sharp distinction between Jews and Gentiles, but the salvation of each is linked one to another. 3. The unbelief of Israel and Gentiles does not stop God' s current of boundless grace. 4. A standing with God is entirely by grace through faith, hence warnings are worthy for both Jew and Gentile. 5. Israel will ultimately be restored.