

# Romans 11:33-36 Commentary

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## Summary of Romans 9-11

Romans 9	Romans 10	Romans 11
<b>Past Election</b>	<b>Present Rejection</b>	<b>Future Reception</b>
God's Sovereignty Israel's Election by God	Man's responsibility Israel's Rejection of God	God's Ways Higher God Not Rejecting Israel

## ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS

Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans 3:21-5:21	Romans 6:1-8:39	Romans 9:1-11:36	Romans 12:1-16:27
SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	WORK OF SALVATION

Romans 11:33 **Oh**, the **depth** of the **riches both** of the **wisdom** and **knowledge** of **God!** **How unsearchable** are His **judgments** and **unfathomable** His **ways** ! (**NASB: Lockman**)

**Greek:** [o bathos ploutou kai sophias kai gnoseos theou: os](#) anecherauneta [ta krimata autou kai](#) anechichniastoi [ai hodoi autou.](#)

**Amplified:** Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unfathomable (inscrutable, unsearchable) are His judgments (His decisions)! And how untraceable (mysterious, undiscoverable) are His ways (His methods, His paths)! ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**ESV:** Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ([ESV](#))

**ICB:** Yes, God's riches are very great! God's wisdom and knowledge have no end! No one can explain the things God decides. No one can understand God's ways. ([ICB: Nelson](#))

**NIV:** Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ([NIV - IBS](#))

**NKJV:** Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

**NLT:** Oh, what a wonderful God we have! How great are his riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his methods! ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** Frankly, I stand amazed at the unfathomable complexity of God's wisdom and God's knowledge. How could man ever understand his reasons for action, or explain his methods of working? ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** O the depth of the wealth and wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments, and how untraceable the paths He takes

**Young's Literal:** O depth of riches, and wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable His judgments, and untraceable His ways!

**OH, THE DEPTH OF THE RICHES BOTH OF THE WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE OF GOD: O bathos ploutou kai sophias kai gnoseos theou:**

- Ps 107:8-43; Proverbs 25:3; Ephesians 3:18
- Ro 2:4; 9:23; Ephesians 1:7; 2:7; 3:8,10,16; Colossians 1:27; 2:2,3
- [Romans 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Ps 36:6 ([Spurgeon's Note](#)) Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God; Thy judgments are [like] a great deep. O LORD, Thou preservest man and beast.

**Spurgeon** has the following thoughts on the **riches of God**...

I remember well being taken one day to see a gorgeous palace at Venice, where every piece of furniture was made with most exquisite taste, and of the richest material, where statues and pictures of enormous price abounded on all hands, and the floor of each room was paved with mosaics of marvellous art, and extraordinary value. As I was shown from room to room, and allowed to roam amid the treasures by its

courteous owner, I felt a considerable timidity, I was afraid to sit anywhere, nor did I hardly dare to put down my foot, or rest my hand to lean. Everything seemed to be too good for ordinary mortals like myself; but when one is introduced into the gorgeous palace of infinite goodness, costlier and fairer far, one gazes wonderingly with reverential awe at the matchless vision. "How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God!" "I am not worthy of the least of all thy benefits. Oh! the depths of the love and goodness of the Lord." — Feathers for Arrows

Our **riches** are beyond the sea; our city with firm foundations lies on the other side the river; gleams of glory from the spirit-world cheer our hearts, and urge us onward. Truly is it said of us, "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord?" — Morning and Evening

Weigh the **riches of Christ** in scales, and His treasure in balances, and then think to count the treasures which belong to the saints. Reach the bottom of Christ's sea of joy, and then hope to understand the bliss which God hath prepared for them that love Him. Overleap the boundaries of Christ's possessions, and then dream of a limit to the fair inheritance of the elect. "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." — Morning and Evening

Will you take Jesus and "dwell in Him?" See, this house is furnished with all you want, it is filled with **riches** more than you will spend as long as you live. Here you can have intimate communion with Christ and feast on His love; here are tables well-stored with food for you to live on for ever; in it, when weary, you can find rest with Jesus; and from it you can look out and see heaven itself. Will you have the house? Ah! if you are houseless, you will say, "I should like to have the house; but may I have it?" Yes; there is the key--the key is, "Come to Jesus." "But," you say, "I am too shabby for such a house." Never mind; there are garments inside. If you feel guilty and condemned, come; and though the house is too good for you, Christ will make you good enough for the house by-and-by. He will wash you and cleanse you, and you will yet be able to sing, "We dwell in Him." Believer: thrice happy art thou to have such a dwelling-place! Greatly privileged thou art, for thou hast a "strong habitation" in which thou art ever safe. And "dwelling in Him," thou hast not only a perfect and secure house, but an everlasting one. When this world shall have melted like a dream, our house shall live, and stand more imperishable than marble, more solid than granite, self-existent as God, for it is God Himself--"We dwell in Him." — Morning and Evening

The **riches of His goodness** are unsearchable; thou shalt never be able to tell them out or even conceive them. Oh, the breadth of the love of Christ! Shall such a love as this have half our hearts? Shall it have a cold love in return? Shall Jesus' marvellous lovingkindness and tender care meet with but faint response and tardy acknowledgment? O my soul, tune thy harp to a glad song of thanksgiving! Go to thy rest rejoicing, for thou art no desolate wanderer, but a beloved child, watched over, cared for, supplied, and defended by thy Lord. — Morning and Evening

Better have God for your guardian, than the Bank of England for your possession. You might spend the wealth of the Indies, but the infinite **riches of God** you can never exhaust. — Morning and Evening

Other riches always bring attendant griefs: none but the Lord's roses are without thorns. — The Interpreter

All the **riches of divine grace** you shall receive in plenty; you shall be as it were drenched with it: and as sometimes the meadows become flooded by the bursting rivers, and the fields are turned into pools, so shall you be--the thirsty land shall be springs of water. — Morning and Evening

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," with all its **riches** and treasures. The whole exchequer of God shall be made over by deed of gift to the soul which is humble enough to be able to receive it without growing proud because of it. God blesses us all up to the full measure and extremity of what it is safe for Him to do. If you do not get a blessing, it is because it is not safe for you to have one. If our heavenly Father were to let your unhumiliated spirit win a victory in His holy war, you would pilfer the crown for yourself, and meeting with a fresh enemy you would fall a victim; so that you are kept low for your own safety. When a man is sincerely humble, and never ventures to touch so much as a grain of the praise, there is scarcely any limit to what God will do for him. Humility makes us ready to be blessed by the God of all grace, and fits us to deal efficiently with our fellow men. True humility is a flower which will adorn any garden. This is a sauce with which you may season every dish of life, and you will find an improvement in every case. Whether it be prayer or praise, whether it be work or suffering, the genuine salt of humility cannot be used in excess. — Morning and Evening

It is our own fault if we make not free with the **riches of our God**. Then, since thou hast such a friend, and He invites thee, draw from Him daily. Never want whilst thou hast a God to go to; never fear or faint whilst thou hast God to help thee; go to thy treasure and take whatever thou needest--there is all that thou canst want.

Learn the divine skill of making God all things to thee. He can supply thee with all, or, better still, He can be to thee instead of all. Let me urge thee, then, to make use of thy God. Make use of Him in prayer. Go to Him often, because He is thy God. O, wilt thou fail to use so great a privilege? Fly to Him, tell Him all thy wants. Use Him constantly by faith at all times. If some dark providence has beclouded thee, use thy God as a "sun;" if some strong enemy has beset thee, find in Jehovah a "shield," for He is a sun and shield to His people. If thou hast lost thy way in the mazes of life, use Him as a "guide," for He will direct thee. Whatever thou art, and wherever thou art, remember God is just what thou wantest, and just where thou wantest, and that He can do all thou wantest. — Morning and Evening

Let us make daily use of our **riches**, and ever repair to Him as to our own Lord in covenant, taking from Him the supply of all we need with as much boldness as men take money from their own purse. — Morning and Evening

Fulness of riches is in Thee!  
From Thee all mercies spring:  
And grace and love, divine and free,  
And power enlivening.

Out of the deep of every heart,  
Let praise to Thee ascend:  
Till Thou to heaven shalt us translate,  
Where praises never end!

**Frederic Louis Godet** - Like a traveller who has reached the summit of an Alpine ascent, the apostle turns and contemplates. Depths are at his feet, but waves of light illumine them, and there spreads all around an immense horizon which his eye commands. The plan of God in the government of mankind spreads out before him, and he expresses the feelings of admiration and gratitude with which the prospect fills his heart.

**Newell** - The last four verses are in the nature of a doxology. The apostle's heart was filled with worship, praise, and admiration as the full blaze of the divine plan fills the horizon of his soul... Apart from revelation none can know God's mind, just as no created being could ever be His counselor. No one ever earned grace by first giving to Him in order to earn a blessing; but everything is from Him, and through Him, and to Him, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.

**Cambridge Greek** - These verses contain at once a profound confession of faith in the goodness and wisdom of GOD, in spite of all the problems which experience raises and does not solve, and a confession of humility and reserve as regards the reasoning which has been given. Something has been seen and said of the purpose and ways of GOD, but not all: enough to confirm faith and to awake worship and praise; but not to explain everything: glimpses of the end to encourage man in the time of probation; but not more than glimpses. The fundamental postulates of faith are the wisdom of GOD and His all-embracing and loving purpose; these are the only sure guide among all the problems of experience, and they are a sufficient guide. ([Romans 11 - Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary](#))

**Guzik** - Who would have planned the whole scenario with Israel, the Gentiles and the Church as God has planned it? Yet, we can see the great wisdom and compassion in His plan. (Guzik Commentary on the Bible)

**Depth** (deep) ([899](#)) (**bathos** is the noun derived from adjective **bathús** = deep) literally describes a distance below a surface and to the depth or a deep place. Bathos is used literally for the **depths** of the earth (Mt 13:5), to the depths of the sea (Lk 5:4).

Figuratively **bathos** describes a great or extreme degree of anything and as a quality in relation to God it describes His inexhaustibility, His profundity, and His inscrutability (Ro 11:33, 1Cor 2:10). The adjective **bathus** is used to describe the "**deep** things of Satan (created being)." (Rev 2:24-[note](#)) What a contrast Satan's **deep** knowledge is with the **depth** of the wisdom and knowledge of God (The Creator)!

**Denney** - Bathos is "a universal figure for what is immeasurable or incalculable: cf. 1 Corinthians 2:10, Revelation 2:24, Ephesians 3:18." ([Romans 11 - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

**John Trapp** - The Romans dedicated a certain lake, the depth whereof they knew not, to Victory; so should we admire the unsearchable counsels of God. ([Romans Commentary](#))

**BDAG** says **bathos** refers to "something nonphysical perceived to be so remote that it is difficult to assess... their poverty reaching down into the depths (Strabo 9, 3, 5 =extreme poverty 2Cor 8:2)."

**Brown** on the figurative sense of **bathos** - "This refers to the unfathomable nature of the ways and judgments of God, as opposed to the mere superficiality of human insight. But it also suggests the richness of the ways

and means available to God in the pursuit of his plan of salvation... Similarly, in Eph. 3:18 bathos occurs in conjunction with other spatial terms in order to express the comprehensiveness of God's grace and of salvation in Christ. Christian faith should not be satisfied with the fragmentary or the superficial... In Rom. 8:39 bathos is linked with **hupsoma** (cf. Isa. 7:11), and clearly describes some kind of power which oppresses mankind... the powers (of the stars) of the deep have been defeated by the power of the love of God in Jesus Christ." (**NIDNTT**)

**TDNTA** - **bathos** means "depth" as a. the depth of a stratum and b. depth as a dimension, also used figuratively for greatness or inscrutability. (Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological dictionary of the New Testament)

**NIDNTT** - bathos is related linguistically to *bēssa* (Doric *bassa*), valley floor, cleft. There is also a close connection with *abyssos*, bottomless (lit. unfathomable. bathos expresses distance from the speaker, but not only downwards. It can be horizontal or even upwards. bathos, therefore, denotes the extension of a thing in any spatial dimension (cf. bathos *trichōn*, length of hair). In military usage bathos indicates the number of men standing behind one another. It is frequently used in conjunction with *hypsos* (high) to denote the full extent of an object in every dimension. Figuratively, bathos expresses: (a) the completeness, intensity, fullness or greatness of an object (especially in conjunction with *hypsos*), or of a human quality (wisdom, understanding, soul); and (b) inscrutability and hiddenness. Hellenistic and especially gnostic religion took up the figurative meaning in speaking of the depth of deity. In the OT (LXX) bathos is used chiefly as equivalent of Heb. *mešûlâh*. In its lit. meaning bathos is used only of the depth of the sea (Exod. 15:5; Neh. 9:11; Zech. 10:11). In its fig. sense bathos always denotes that which is separated from God. bathos, therefore, stands for the inner need of the man troubled by guilt and → sin (Ps. 130:1 [129:1]) and for the external need of pressing circumstances (Ps. 69:2,14 [68:3,15]). bathos expresses the most extreme separation from God (the depths of the sea, Jon. 2:4; Micah 7:19) in passages where the frontier between literal and figurative meanings is fluid. In Ezek. bathos stands for *tahtî* and thus for the underworld (cf. 26:20; 31:14, 18; 32:18f., 24). Here, too, bathos expresses separation from God. Heb. *ma'amaqqîm*, depths, is also rendered in the LXX bathos (Isa. 51:10 etc.), while the adj. bathys is used for the words in the 'āmōq group (cf. Job 11:8; 12:22; Ps. 63:6 [64:6]; Prov. 18:4). (Brown, C. New international dictionary of New Testament theology 2:197. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan)

How great are Thy works, O LORD! Thy thoughts are **very deep**. (Ps 92:5)

**Spurgeon** commenting on God's thoughts as very deep writes... "The Lord's plans are as marvellous as his acts; his designs are as profound as his doings are vast. Creation is immeasurable, and the wisdom displayed in it unsearchable. Some men think but cannot work, and others are mere drudges working without thought; in the Eternal the conception and the execution go together. Providence is inexhaustible, and the divine decrees which originate it are inscrutable. Redemption is grand beyond conception, and the thoughts of love which planned it are infinite. Man is superficial, God is inscrutable; man is shallow, God is deep. Dive as we may we shall never fathom the mysterious plan, or exhaust the boundless wisdom of the all comprehending mind of the Lord. We stand by the fathomless sea of divine wisdom, and exclaim with holy awe, "O the depth!" "  
([Notes](#))

**Webster - bathysphere** - a strongly built steel diving sphere for deep-sea observation. **Depth** =Deepness; the distance or measure of a thing from the surface to the bottom, or to me extreme part downwards or inwards. The depth of a river may be ten feet. The depth of the ocean is unfathomable. The depth of a wound may be an inch. In a vertical direction, depth is opposed to height. A deep place in a body of water; a part that is far from the outside or surface the depths of the woods abyss. Unsearchableness; infinity. The breadth and depth of the love of Christ, are its vast extent. Profoundness; extent of penetration, or of the capacity of penetrating; as depth of skill. A profound or intense state (as of thought or feeling) the depths of misery ; also : a reprehensibly low condition hadn't realized that standards had fallen to such depths

**Bathos** - 8v in NT - Matt. 13:5; Mk. 4:5; Lk. 5:4; Ro 8:39; 11:33; 1 Co. 2:10; 2 Co. 8:2; Eph. 3:18. Usage: deep(1), deep water(1), depth(5), depths(1).

Matthew 13:5 "Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no **depth** of soil.

**Jesus** explains this parable - Matthew 13:20 "The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; **21** yet he has no [firm] root in himself, but is [only] temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.

(i.e., they were not regenerated or born again by the Word of God).

Mark 4:5 "Other seed fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because it had no **depth** of soil.

Luke 5:4 When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch."

Romans 8:39-**note** nor height, nor **depth**, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Haldane** commenting on **nor height, nor depth** writes that "These expressions appear to comprise all that had been said of angels, principalities, and powers, including them altogether to give greater force to the declaration concerning them. Wherever they were, or whatever other power might inhabit heaven above, or hell beneath, if either a part of them, or the whole in combination, were to assail those whom Jesus loves, it would be of no avail. ([Romans 8 - Haldane's Exposition on the Epistle to the Romans](#))

**Newell** - Nor height, nor depth-The astronomers would frighten us with their figures of the vastness of the universe But Christ has passed through all the heavens, and is at the right hand of God! And God has loved us in Christ-there is no separation from that love. But "depth"-Ah, poor mortals we are afraid, even of earthly cliffs and chasms. Yea, but Christ descended into "the lower parts of the earth, " into "the abyss" at "the heart of the earth" (Eph 4:9; Rom 10:7; Mat 12:40). Moreover, He has said that His Church would not enter the gates of Hades (Mt 16:18). And they shall not! But even if God had arranged that they should, Christ says to John, "Fear not; I am the First and the Last, and the Living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades!" This is indeed a glorious salvation! No "depth" can separate us from God's love in Christ. ([Romans 8: Expository Notes Verse by Verse](#))

**Matthew Henry** takes this as somewhat figurative commenting that "neither the height of prosperity and preferment, nor the depth of adversity and disgrace; nothing from heaven above, no storms, no tempests; nothing on earth below, no rocks, no seas, no dungeons.

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

1 Corinthians 2:10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the **depths** of God.

2 Corinthians 8:2 that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their **deep** poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.

Ephesians 3:18-**note** may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and **depth**, (Eph 3:19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God.)

**Bathos** - 18v in non-apocryphal Septuagint - Job 28:11; Ps 69:2, 14; Pr 18:3; Eccl 7:24; Isa 7:11; 51:10; Ezek 26:20; 31:14, 18; 32:18, 24; 43:13-14; Amos 9:3; Jonah 2:3; Mic 7:19; Zech 10:11.

Isa 7:11 "Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; make [it]**deep** as Sheol or high as heaven."

Mic 7:19 He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, Thou wilt cast all their sins Into the **depths** of the sea.

**Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary** - Bathos translates the Hebrew term m<sup>e</sup>tsûlâh, "deep," as well as tachtî, "the underworld" (e.g., Ezekiel 26:20; 31:14,18; 32:18-24). Literally bathos can describe the depths of the ocean (e.g., Zechariah 10:11). Figuratively the Septuagint translators employed bathos to denote the distance between God and a person in deep need because of sin.

**Moule** - Here, at the close of this discussion of the case of Israel,—in which he has held up for our submission the unfathomable mystery of electing sovereignty, and also the strange ways by which Divine judgment is often made the instrument of Divine mercy, —the Apostle turns to the Supreme Object of his thought and love, and utters his ascription of worship and praise to the All-Wise and Almighty. Such a doxology is perfectly *in the manner* of Scripture, in which the *ultimate* aim ever is not the glory, nor even the happiness, of Man, (dear as his happiness is to God and His messengers,) but the Glory of God. ([Romans 11 Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges](#))

**Riches** (4149) (ploutos from pletho = fill) properly denotes abundance, plenitude, and literally is used to refer to material wealth or

prosperity (abundance of earthly, temporal goods) which is the meaning in the parable of the seed and the soils (Mt 13:22, Mk 4:19, Lk 8:14 = Material riches are deceitful and choke out reception of the Word of God. Be careful all you wealthy readers! Contrast spiritual riches - Ep 3:8) Indeed, think of the people who know whose whole lives glow with the glory of God for they are rich in spiritual possessions, albeit often poor in material possessions! Here Paul is obviously not speaking of worldly riches but of spiritual riches.

In Him (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us (see **notes** Ephesians 1:7; 1:8)

To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, (see **note** Ephesians 3:10)

**Ploutos** - 21x in NT - Matt. 13:22; Mk. 4:19; Lk. 8:14; Rom. 2:4; 9:23; 11:12, 33; 2 Co. 8:2; Eph. 1:7, 18; 2:7; 3:8, 16; Phil. 4:19; Col. 1:27; 2:2; 1Tim. 6:17; Heb. 11:26; Jas. 5:2; Rev. 5:12; 18:17

**MacDonald** sums up Paul's concluding doxology as looking "back over the entire Epistle and the divine wonders that have been unfolded. Paul has expounded the marvelous plan of salvation by which a just God can save ungodly sinners and still be just in doing so. He has shown how Christ's work brought more glory to God and more blessing to men than Adam lost through his sin. He has explained how grace produces holy living in a way that law could never do. He has traced the unbreakable chain of God's purpose from foreknowledge to eventual glorification. He has set forth the doctrine of sovereign election and the companion doctrine of human responsibility. And he has traced the justice and harmony of God's dispensational dealings with Israel and the nations. Now nothing could be more appropriate than to burst forth in a hymn of praise and worship. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Wisdom** (4678) (**sophia**) is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding.

**God alone possesses wisdom in the absolute sense** for "with Him are **wisdom** and might. To Him belong counsel and understanding." (Job 12:13).

**Wisdom** strikes many in the modern world as an "abstract" idea, one which is difficult to define practically. Biblical wisdom however is to the contrary imminently practical, representing in its essence the practical skill for living successfully. Wisdom is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding. As discussed below God Alone is the Source of this quality of wisdom, quite different from the best wisdom of fallen men.

**James** describes men's wisdom as "not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing." This wisdom he contrasts the wisdom of God which is "from above (and) is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." (James 3:15-18) This godly wisdom is made available to godless men through the God-Man, Christ Jesus.

**Paul**, in describing the gospel, wrote that "the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.<sup>19</sup> For it is written, "I will destroy the **wisdom** of the wise, And the cleverness of the clever I will set aside." Where is the **wise** man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the **wisdom** of the world? For since in the **wisdom** of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for **wisdom**; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the **wisdom** of God. Because the foolishness of God is **wiser** than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." (1Cor 1:18-25)

**Paul** adds that "we do speak **wisdom** among those who are mature; a **wisdom**, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak **God's wisdom** in a mystery, the hidden **wisdom**, which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the **wisdom** which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;" (1Cor 2:6-8)

**How is God's Omniscience (knows all things) compared to the Wisdom of God?** In M H Smith's Systematic Theology we read that "Along with omniscience God is said to be all-wise. The distinction between knowledge and **wisdom** is recognized in most languages. They are rooted in different capacities of the soul. The source of knowledge is study; of **wisdom**, discernment. Knowledge is discursive, **wisdom** intuitive. Knowledge is theoretical; **wisdom** practical, teleological; it makes knowledge subservient to an end. Knowledge is a matter of the mind apart from the will; **wisdom** is a matter of the mind made subservient to the will."

**J I Packer** says that "God's wisdom is seen in His works of creation, preservation and redemption: it is His choice of His own glory as His goal (Ps 46:10; Isa. 42:8; 48:11), and His decision to achieve it first by creating a marvelous variety of things and people (Ps.

104:24; Pr 3:19, 20), second by kindly providences of all sorts (Ps 145:13, 14, 15, 16; Acts 14:17), and third by the redemptive "wisdom" of "Christ crucified" (1Co 1:18-2:16) and the resultant world church (Ep 3:10). (J. I. Packer Concise Theology)

God's **wisdom** is infinite, unsearchable, incomparable, and invincible. (See related topics: **Wisdom, Infinite, Transcendent**)

### Related Resources on Wisdom of God...

- [Attributes of God - The Wisdom of God, part 1 - by Dr S Lewis Johnson- and The Knowledge and Wisdom of God, part 2 - Recommended Resource](#) - includes Mp3, Pdf or MS Word document. This is only one study out of over 100 in depth lectures by Dr Johnson on Systematic Theology including studies of the doctrines of God, Christ, the Spirit, Prayer, Salvation, etc. ([click for this extensive list](#))
- [The Wisdom of God](#) by [Bob Deffinbaugh, Th.M.](#)
- [The Wisdom of God](#) by Stephen Charnock
- [Of the Wisdom of God](#) by John Gill
- [The Wisdom of God - Mp3](#) by Jerry Bridges
- [The Wisdom of God](#) by A.W. Tozer

Paul writes to the Colossian saints that in Christ "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (see noteColossians 2:3)

**Moule - wisdom and knowledge** - Scarcely, in such a passage as this, to be minutely distinguished. They blend into one idea—omniscience acting in eternal righteousness and love. ([Romans 11 Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges](#))

**Knowledge (1108)(gnosis)** in simple terms is the possession of information of what is known. Gnosis describes the comprehension or intellectual grasp of something.

**Arthur W. Pink** - God is omniscient. He knows everything: everything possible, everything actual; all events, all creatures, of the past, the present, and the future. (See related topic: **Omniscient**)

**Godet** comments that Paul's description of "This depth is rich, not in darkness, but in light; it is a depth both of wisdom and knowledge. —The two *kai*, both... and ... , have the disjunctive sense; they distinguish the two following substantives very precisely, however closely allied their meaning may be. The second, *gnosis*, **knowledge**, refers especially in the context to divine foreknowledge, and in general to the complete view which God has of all the free determinations of men, whether as individuals or as nations. The former, *sophia*, **wisdom**, denotes the admirable skill with which God weaves into His plan the free actions of man, and transforms them into so many means for the accomplishment of the excellent end which He set originally before Him.

**Tozer** commenting on the riches of God to His children writes "So there we are—and as Christians, we are not only rich but nobly rich! Rich with riches which need no apology. Riches which have no taint of having come to us through defiled hands. I wonder when we will begin to behave and to live on the level of our spiritual riches instead of acting like poverty-stricken creatures trying to crawl under a leaf so we will not be seen? Let's let the world know how rich we really are! Let's tell it—we are being kept by the power of God unto an inheritance reserved in heaven for us! That is the full-time business of the child of God! — Renewed Day by Day

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Christian theology teaches that God in His essential nature is both inscrutable and ineffable. By simple definition this means that He is incapable of being searched into or understood, and that He cannot tell forth or utter what He is.

This inability lies not in God but in the limitations of our creaturehood: "Why inquirest thou after my name, for it is secret?"

Only God knows God in any final meaning of the word know: "Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

God in His essential Being is unique in the only sense that word will bear. That is, there is nothing like Him in the universe. What He is cannot be conceived by the mind because He is "altogether other" than anything with which we have had experience before. The mind has no material with which to start. No man has ever entertained a thought which can be said to describe God in any but the vaguest and most imperfect sense. Where God is known at all it must be otherwise than by our creature-reason.

In a famed treatise on the Trinity written in the third century, Novatian said: "Every possible statement that can be made about God expresses some possession or virtue of God, rather than God Himself. The conception of God as He is can only be grasped in one way—by thinking of Him as a Being whose attributes and greatness are beyond our powers of understanding, or even of thought."— Renewed Day by Day



## HOW UNSEARCHABLE ARE HIS JUDGMENTS: os anexerauneta ta krimata autou:

- Job 5:9; 9:10; 11:7-9; 26:14; 33:13; 37:19,23; Ps 36:6; 40:5; 77:19; Ps 92:5; Daniel 4:35
- [Romans 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**A T Robertson** - Paul's argument concerning God's elective grace and goodness has carried him to the heights, and now he pauses on the edge of the precipice as he contemplates God's wisdom and knowledge, fully conscious of his inability to sound the bottom with the plummet of human reason and words.

**Unsearchable** (419) (**anexereunetos** from **a** = without + **exereunao** [**ex** = out + **eraunao** = to search or examine] = search out, focusing on the intellectual aspect of the search) literally means "not searched out" and thus it signifies that which is impossible to search out or fully understand. Unsearchable, unfathomable, inscrutable (not readily investigated, interpreted, or understood).

**Robert Morey** - The word anexerauneta is a plural neuter of anexereunetos and is a combination of "a" plus exereunao which means to search out or explore something until you understand it. God's judgments are **inscrutable**, i.e. you may investigate all you want, but, in the end, you will have to throw your hands up and admit defeat. God's judgments are "incapable of being investigated as to their grounds or reason." (Morey, R. A. *The Trinity: Evidences and Issues*. Iowa Falls, IA.: World Pub)

**Robertson** - Some of God's wisdom can be known (Ro 1:20f.), but not all.

**TDNT** - This postclassical word means "inscrutable" and is used in Romans 11:33 for the mystery of God's way of judgment with Israel that leads to grace. The term implies that the question of the meaning of this judgment cannot be given any theoretical human answer. ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

**Job** declares "For man is born for trouble, as sparks fly upward. But as for me, I would seek God, And I would place my cause before God; Who does great and unsearchable things, wonders without number. (Job 5:9) Who does great things, unfathomable, And wondrous works without number. (Job 9:10)

I love Job's picturesque description of our matchless Lord as he asks rhetorically...

Behold, these are **the fringes of His ways**; and how faint a word we hear of Him! But His mighty thunder, who can understand? (NASB, Job 26:14)

Yet these are but [a small part of His doings] the outskirts of His ways or the mere fringes of His force, **the faintest whisper of His voice!** Who dares contemplate or who can understand the thunders of His full, magnificent power? (Amplified, Job 26:14)

Although Job's detractors were far from kind to suffering Job, one of them, Zophar, does give eloquent testimony of the Most High God declaring...

"Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty? They are high as the heavens, what can you do? Deeper than Sheol, what can you know? Its measure is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. (Job 11:7-9)

Elihu another of Job's friends declared...

Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out; He is excellent in power; and to justice and plenteous righteousness He does no violence [He will disregard no right]. [Our finite brains cannot figure out His judgments and why even though they might not be clear to us, they are perfectly just and holy judgments. (Amplified, Job 37:23)

The psalmist declares that "Clouds and thick darkness surround Him. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne." (Ps 97:2) ([Spurgeon's Note](#))

**Moule - unsearchable** - It is well to weigh, and accept, this word at the close of such an argument. In his very act of praise the Apostle confesses the inability of even his own inspired thought to explain the Divine mercies and judgments, in the sense of clearing all difficulties. "Who art thou that repliest against God?" "Clouds and darkness are round about Him;" and, in certain respects, it is only the intelligent but profound submission of faith that can say, in view of those clouds, "Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne." (Psalm 97:2.) ([Romans 11 Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges](#))

**C S Lewis** wrote that "Amiable agnostics will talk cheerfully about 'man's search for God.' To me as I then was, they might as well have talked about the man's search for a cat." (Surprised by Joy)

## AND UNFATHOMABLE HIS WAYS: kai anexichniastoi ai hodoi autou:

- [Romans 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Unfathomable** (421) (**anexichniastos** from **a** = without + **exichniázo** = explore, to trace out) means that which cannot be traced out, which is past finding out and thus which is impossible to comprehend. It describes that which is impossible of understanding by human minds. Fathomless.

**Morey** notes that "The word **anexichniastoi** is the nomative plural masculine of **anexichniastos** which is a combination of **a** plus **exichniázo** which is derived from **ichnos** (footprint). Only used once in the New Testament (Ed: Not true - see Eph 3:8 below), it is found in the **Septuagint (LXX)** in Job 5:9; 9:10; 13:24. It offers a **striking figure of speech**. When following someone in the desert, all you have to do is to trace their footprints in the sand. From their footprints, you can discover where they came from and where they are. But, when it comes to the ways of God, there are **no footprints in the sand**. You must throw up your hands in defeat and say, "God's path is untraceable!" Dr. Randy Yeager comments "God's thoughts, His philosophy, the rationale behind His decrees defy human analysis. The hiss of the serpent can be discerned unmistakably in the effort to find a theology that man can understand in all of its parts. Unregenerate philosophers and theologians would never write what Paul has written here, and they are contemptuous of what he has written. Their theology is clear to them because it is the product of their own intellectual creation." (Morey, R. A. The Trinity : Evidences and Issues. Iowa Falls, IA.: World Pub)

**Moule** says anexichniastos is literally "not to be tracked by footprints."

**Wuest** - Vincent translates, "that which cannot be tracked out." The word could be used of a blood-hound who found it impossible to follow the scent of a criminal, or of a guide who could not trace out or follow a poorly marked path in the woods."

**John Trapp** - It is with us here as with hounds at a loss, having neither footsteps nor scent left of the game they pursue (**anexichniastos**). Let it satisfy us for present, that at the last day of judgment we shall see a harmony in this discord of things; and that the reason of God's ways, now hidden, shall then be made manifest. In the meantime know, that Arcana Dei, Arca Dei (Augustine), secrets of God and the ark of God, of pry not into it, lest ye perish; but hold this for certain, God's judgments are sometimes secret, always just. ([Romans Commentary](#))

**Robertson** - Some of God's tracks he has left plain to us, but others are beyond us.

The only other NT use of **anexichniastos** is also by Paul in Ephesians 3 where he writes that "To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the **unfathomable** riches of Christ (Eph 3:8-note)

**See related topic: Incomprehensible** (Play song [Do You Not Know? Another version](#) - scroll down to song [Do You Not Know/All in All](#))

He has made everything appropriate (KJV = beautiful) in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart (Amplified = [a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun but God alone can satisfy]), yet so that man will not find out (NIV = fathom) the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end. (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

**F L Godet** - These two orders (God's judgments and ways) of things are characterized by the most extraordinary epithets which the most pliant of languages can furnish: **anexereunetos**, what cannot be searched to the bottom; **anexichniastos**, the traces of which cannot be followed to the end. The former of these epithets applies to the supreme principle which the mind seeks to approach, but which it does not reach; the latter to an abundance of ramifications and of details in execution which the understanding cannot follow to the end. These epithets are often quoted with the view of demonstrating the incomprehensibility to man of the divine decrees, and in particular of that of predestination (Aug.). But it must not be forgotten that St. Paul's exclamation is called forth, not by the obscurity of God's plans, but, on the contrary, by their dazzling clearness. If they are incomprehensible and unfathomable, it is to man's natural understanding, and until they have been revealed; but, says the apostle, 1 Cor. 2:10. "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth ( ereuna ) all things, even the deep things (ta bathe) of God." It is therefore in view of the unveiled mystery that the exclamation is raised, as is done by Paul here: "O the depth of the riches!" A fact which does not prevent the mind which understands them in part from having always to discover in them new laws or applications.

**John Piper** - "Education about God precedes and serves exultation in God. Learning truth precedes loving truth. Right reflection on God precedes right affection for God. Seeing the glory of Christ precedes savoring the glory of Christ. Good theology is the foundation of great doxology. Knowledge is utterly crucial. But it is not an end in itself. It serves faith and love. And if it doesn't, it only puffs up, as Paul says in 1Co8:1. Where education does not produce heartfelt exultation in God, it degenerates into proud intellectualism. And where exultation is not sustained and shaped by solid Biblical education, it degenerates into proud emotionalism.

God means to be known and loved. Seen and savored. Pondered and praised. " ([Sermon](#))

**Ray Stedman** addressing God's "**unfathomable... ways**" writes that "it is clear from Scripture that nothing God ever planned interferes with human responsibility. Nothing God has ever said will happen in any way infringes on our free will or choice. We are free to make choices. We know it. We feel ourselves free to decide to do this or that, to do good or bad. Nothing God ever plans interferes with that freedom of human choice. And yet the amazing thing is that nothing humans ever do can frustrate God's sovereign plan. Isn't that amazing? How can you explain that? No matter what we do, whether we choose this or that with the freedom of choice we have, ultimately it all works out to accomplish what God has determined shall be done. That is the kind of God we have. Paul is not only impressed with God's inscrutable wisdom and ways, but he contrasts it with the impotence of man. He asks three very searching questions. If you have trouble with this, try to answer his questions: His first one is, "Who has known the mind of the Lord?" What he is asking is, "Who has ever anticipated what God is going to do?" Have you? Have you ever been able to figure out how God is going to handle the situations you get into? Oh, we all try, but it never turns out quite the way we think it will, does it? There is a little twist to it that we never could have guessed. ([Our Great and Glorious God](#))

**J. B. Phillips** wrote a book a number of years ago entitled **Your God Is Too Small** exposing views of God that we all hold to that are woefully inadequate. The "Cosmic Policeman"- the view of God that he is standing around every corner just waiting for us to slip up with respect to the law. Or the "indulgent old man" - a little senile but very friendly, or the "frantic manager" - he's got sweat on his brow because the world is such a mess and he is trying to hold it all together, or the "parental hangover" - all the warts and scars in your parent's lives that you project unto God. Every single one of us here this morning has skewed views of God. Views of God that are skewed because of our background, and our experiences or perhaps just simply because of our ignorance. And we don't realize that we are actually worshipping an idol. Much of our lives and much of our time is spent worshipping a figment of our own imaginations and what we fail to realize is that God exists independently of our views of him. The God who is there exists as he is regardless of our woefully, inadequate views of him. And our goal as Christians ought to be to bring our understanding of God in line with the truth of who he really is.

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God's Ways - After Elijah (1 Kings 17:1-16) had experienced some especially trying times, the Lord told him to flee to Zarephath where he could find food and shelter. Imagine Elijah's surprise when he discovered that the widow who was to provide for him was extremely poor! In fact, she expected that she and her son would soon die of starvation.

How often God delights to astonish us by the wonder of His ways! Our limited understanding of Him can be likened to a fly crawling on one of the great pillars of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. What does that tiny insect know about the architect's magnificent design? It sees only the little space of stone on which it moves. The beautiful carvings and ornamental work seem like towering mountains and deep valleys that only impede progress and obscure the view.

We as Christians often see only our immediate circumstances and perceive but a glimmer of God's marvelous purpose. The obstacles that block our vision and get in the way of our plans are actually part of the beautiful designs of divine grace. Our heavenly Father knows exactly what He is doing. Although His ways are unsearchable, He assures us that all will work out for our good if we trust Him. -- **Henry G Bosch** ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God's ways and judgments baffle those  
Who do not see His perfect plan;  
But those who trust His saving grace,  
With wonder all His actions scan!  
-- H G Bosch

**God may conceal the purpose of His ways,  
but His ways are not without purpose.**

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There was an article in Psychology Today several years ago that noted that in spite of the claims that our society has become Godless, ninety-five percent of the representative sample said that actually believed in God. What has changed are not people's affirmations of God, but their belief about him. The study asked these people what they thought about God by asking them several questions concerning what God was like and giving an option of answers. The conclusion of the study was that people had images of God today that are totally different than how the Bible portrays him.

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The hymn, "**Lord, My Weak Thought in Vain Would Climb**", by Ray Palmer puts into verse the essence of Romans 11:33 ([play hymn](#))

Lord, my weak thought in vain would climb

To search the starry vault profound;  
In vain would wing her flight sublime  
To find creation's utmost bound.

But weaker yet that thought must prove  
To search Thy great eternal plan,  
Thy sovereign counsels, born of love  
Long ages ere the world began.

When my dim reason would demand  
Why that, or this, Thou dost ordain,  
By some vast deep I seem to stand,  
Whose secrets I must ask in vain.

When doubts disturb my troubled breast,  
And all is dark as night to me,  
Here, as on solid rock, I rest—  
That so it seemeth good to Thee.

Be this my joy, that evermore  
Thou rulest all things at Thy will;  
Thy sovereign wisdom I adore,  
And calmly, sweetly, trust Thee still.

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**Behind the Scenes** - While learning to use a new computer, I was troubled by a faint clicking sound that indicated it was working even though nothing was happening on the screen. The manufacturer's representative on the help hotline said, "No problem. The computer is probably running an application you can't see and is working in the background."

As I thought about the phrase "working in the background," I began to realize how visually oriented I am in my relationship with God. If I can't see something, I assume it's not happening. But that's not the way God operates.

I see a striking example of God's "behind the scenes" work in the conversion of Saul. While Christians were suffering under his ruthless persecution (Acts 8:1-3), God was preparing to transform him into a dynamic representative of Christ (Acts 9:15).

Is there a situation in your life today where you cannot see God working? It may be that your circumstances are resisting every attempt at change. Perhaps someone you love is obstinately refusing to respond to God. Even though it may appear that nothing is happening, God is at work--behind the scenes, in the background, accomplishing His purpose. — David C. McCasland

Behind my life the Weaver stands  
And works His wondrous will;  
I leave it in His all-wise hands  
And trust His perfect skill. --Anon.

**In the drama of life,  
God is the director behind the scenes.**

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#### Related resources...

- [Summary on the Attributes of God](#)
- [Spurgeon on the Attributes of God](#)
- [Israel of God - Is God "Finished" with Israel in His prophetic plan?](#)
- [Table Comparing/contrasting Israel & Church](#)
- [Does the Church Fulfill Israel's Program? - John Walvoord](#)
- [The Jewish People, Jesus Christ and World History - S Lewis Johnson](#)
- [Eschatological Problems IX- Israel's Restoration - John Walvoord](#)
- [Will Israel Build a Temple in Jerusalem- Walvoord](#)
- [Eschatological Problems V - Is the Church the Israel of God- Walvoord](#)

- [Eschatological Problems VI- The Fulfillment Of The Abrahamic Covenant - Walvoord](#)
- [Eschatological Problems IX- Israel's Restoration - Walvoord](#)
- [Eschatological Problems X- The New Covenant with Israel - Walvoord](#)
- [Israel And The Nations - John Walvoord](#)
- [Does the Church Fulfill Israel's Program- — Part 1 - Walvoord](#)
- [Does the Church Fulfill Israel's Program- — Part 2 - Walvoord](#)
- [Does the Church Fulfill Israel's Program- — Part 3 - Walvoord](#)

#### Online Book by Dr John Walvoord - Israel in Prophecy

- [Chapter I The New State Of Israel](#)
- [Chapter II The Promise To Abraham](#)
- [Chapter III Israel's Future As A Nation](#)
- [Chapter IV The Promise Of The Land To Israel](#)
- [Chapter V The Kingdom Promised To David](#)
- [Chapter VI The Suffering Of Israel](#)
- [Chapter VII The Glorious Restoration Of Israel](#)
- [Selected Bibliography](#)

#### Online Articles by Arnold Fruchtenbaum related to Israel

- [Israelology: Part 1 of 6 Introduction: Definition of Terms](#)
- [Israelology: Part 2 of 6 Israel Present \(Note: Article begins on Page 2\)](#)
- [Israelology: Part 3 of 6 Israel Present \(Continued\)](#)
- [Israelology: Part 4 of 6 - Israel Future \(Part One\)](#)
- [Israelology: Part 5 of 6 - Israel Future \(Part Two\)](#)
- [Israelology: Part 6 of 6 Other Relevant Topics - Illustrations of Israel \(including marriage\)](#)

Are you confused about God's plan for Israel? Then I highly recommend Tony Garland's 12 Hour Course on **Romans 9-11** in which he addresses in depth the question of [What Will Happen to Israel?](#) ([click](#)) or see the individual lectures below)

- [Romans 9:1-5 Paul's Sorrow Concerning Israel](#)
- [Romans 9:6-13 Children of the Promise](#)
- [Romans 9:14-24 The Potter and the Clay](#)
- [Romans 9:25-33 A Remnant Will be Saved](#)
- [Romans 10:1-13 The Righteousness of God](#)
- [Romans 10:14-21 Has Israel Not Heard?](#)
- [Romans 11:1-6 God Has Not Cast Away The Jews](#)
- [Romans 11:7-15 Life from the Dead](#)
- [Romans 11:16-24 Two Olive Trees](#)
- [Romans 11:25-36 The Salvation of Israel](#)

Note that when you click the preceding links, each link will in turn give you several choices including an **Mp3 message** and brief transcript notes. The Mp3's are long (avg 70+ min) but are in depth and thoroughly Scriptural with many quotations from the Old Testament, which is often much less well understood than the NT by many in the church today. Garland takes a literal approach to Scripture, and his love for the Jews and passion to see them saved comes through very clearly in these 12 hours of teaching! Take your home Bible Study group through this series if you dare. Take notes on the tapes as the transcripts are a very abbreviated version of the audio messages. This course is highly recommended for all who love Israel! I think you will agree that Tony Garland, despite coming to faith after age 30 as an engineer, clearly has been given a special anointing by God to promulgate the truth concerning Israel and God's glorious future plan for the Jews. Garland has also produced more than 20 hours of superb audio teaching in his verse by verse commentary on the [Revelation](#) (in depth transcripts also available) which will unravel (in a way you did not think was possible considering the plethora of divergent interpretations) God's final message of the triumph and return of the our Lord Jesus Christ as the King of kings and Lord of lords! Maranatha! (See [Maranatha - In Depth Word Study](#))!

Romans 11:34 For **WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR ? (NASB: Lockman)**

**Greek:** [Tis gar egno \(3SAAI\) noun kuriou? e tis sumboulos autou egeneto? \(3SAMI\)](#)

**Amplified:** For who has known the mind of the Lord and who has understood His thoughts, or who has [ever] been His counselor? ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**ESV:** "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" ([ESV](#))

**ICB:** As the Scripture says, "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Who has been able to give the Lord advice?" Isaiah 40: 13 ([ICB: Nelson](#))

**NIV:** "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" ([NIV - IBS](#))

**NKJV:** "For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?"

**NLT:** For who can know what the Lord is thinking? Who knows enough to be his counselor? ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** For: 'Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become his counsellor?' ' ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** for whoever knew the Lord's mind? or who became His counsellor?

**Young's Literal:** for who did know the mind of the Lord? or who did become His counsellor?

**FOR WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR: tis gar egno (3SAAI) noun kuriou e tis sumboulos autou egeneto (3SAMI):**

- Job 15:8; 36:22; Isaiah 40:13; Jeremiah 23:18; 1Corinthians 2:16
- [Romans 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**For** - Always **pause** and **ponder** this important **term of explanation**.

Paul's first question contrasts the always limited knowledge of man with the infinite knowledge of God. No created being can know the mind of the Lord, except to the extent that He chooses to reveal it. No one is qualified to advise God. God is so wise that He does not need our counsel, and would not profit by it any way.

In **Jeremiah** we hear the question "But who has stood in the council of the LORD, that he should see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His word and listened?" (Jeremiah 23:18)

The **psalmist** declares "Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders which Thou hast done, And Thy thoughts toward us; There is none to compare with Thee; If I would declare and speak of them, They would be too numerous to count." (Ps 40:5)

**Spurgeon** has these words on Psalm 40:5

**Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done** Creation, providence, and redemption, teem with wonders as the sea with life. Our special attention is called by this passage to the marvels which cluster around the cross and flash from it. The accomplished redemption achieves many ends, and compasses a variety of designs; the outgoings of the atonement are not to be reckoned up, the influences of the cross reach further than the beams of the sun. Wonders of grace beyond all enumeration take their rise from the cross; adoption, pardon, justification, and a long chain of godlike miracles of love proceed from it. Note that our Lord here speaks of the Lord as "my God." The man Christ Jesus claimed for himself and us a covenant relationship with Jehovah. Let our interest in our God be ever to us our peculiar treasure.

**And thy thoughts which are toward us** The divine thoughts march with the divine acts, for it is not according to God's wisdom to act without deliberation and counsel. All the divine thoughts are good and gracious towards His elect. God's thoughts of love are very many, very wonderful, very practical! Muse on them, dear reader; no sweeter subject ever occupied your mind. God's thoughts of you are many, let not yours be few in return.

**They cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee** Their sum is so great as to forbid alike analysis and numeration. Human minds fail to measure, or to arrange in order, the Lord's ways and thoughts; and it must always be so, for He hath said, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." **No maze to lose oneself in like the labyrinth of love. How**

**sweet to be outdone, overcome and overwhelmed by the astonishing grace of the Lord our God!**

If I would **declare and speak** of them, and surely this should be the occupation of my tongue at all seasonable opportunities, they are more than can be **numbered**; far beyond all human arithmetic they are multiplied; thoughts from all eternity, thoughts of my fall, my restoration, my redemption, my conversion, my pardon, my upholding, my perfecting, my eternal reward; the list is too long for writing, and the value of the mercies too great for estimation. Yet, if we cannot show forth all the works of the Lord, let us not make this an excuse for silence; for our Lord, Who is in this our best example, often spake of the tender thoughts of the great Father.

[\(Spurgeon's Notes\)](#)

**Isaiah** asks "Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counselor has informed Him? 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 (Isaiah 40:13-14)

**Paul** quotes Isaiah in 1 Corinthians writing "For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE SHOULD INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ. (1Corinthians 2:16)

**King Nebuchadnezzar** the greatest earthly king of his day after being humbled and then returning to his senses, blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him Who lives forever and ever testifying that "All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done? (Amplified "What are you doing")" (Daniel 4:35-note)

**Who became His counselor** - Answer? No one! But He is our great Counselor. Do you seek His counsel before making significant life decisions?

**Counselor** ([4825](#)) (**sumboulos** from **sún** = together + **boule** = counsel) is an adviser. It is one who informs about a fact or situation and/or recommends a course of action.

**Godet** says **sumboulos** "denotes one who deliberates with another, and can communicate to him something of his wisdom."

**Godet** observes that this question "bears on the relation between human and divine wisdom. It is no longer merely the discovery of the secrets of God by the study of His works which is in question, but some good counsel which man might have been called to give to the Creator in the organizing of His plans. The word *sumboulos* denotes one who deliberates with another, and can communicate to him something of his wisdom. It is therefore a more exalted position than that supposed by the previous question.

**Lord (master, owner)**([2962](#))(**kurios**) conveys the main sense of kurios is that of a supreme one, one who is sovereign and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership and uncontested power. **Lord** is not merely a name that composes a title, but signifies a call to action so that every saint should willingly, reverently bow down to Jesus Christ. If Christ is our Lord, we are to live under Him, consciously, continually submitting our wills to him as His loyal, loving bondservants ("love slaves"), always seeking first His Kingdom and His righteousness (Mt 6:33-note). According to this practical working "definition" beloved we all need to ask ourselves "Is Jesus Christ my Lord?". "Do I arise each day, acknowledges this is the day the Lord hath made?" (Ps 118:24-[note](#)) "Do I surrender my will to His will as I begin each day?" (cp Ro 12:1-note, Ro 12:2-note) Beloved, don't misunderstand. None of us have "arrived" in this area of Jesus as Lord of our lives. And it is precisely for that reason that Peter commands us to continually "grow (present imperative) in the grace (unmerited favor, power to live the supernatural, abundant life in Christ) and knowledge (not just intellectual but transformational) of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." (2Pe 3:18-note) So do not be discouraged. Don't "throw in the towel" as they say. Keep on keeping on, pressing (continually = present tense) "on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Php 3:14note)

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**Less Complicated Design** - Alfonso X, the king of Castile and Leon known as "Alfonso the Wise," was particularly famous for his patronage of the arts and sciences. The most celebrated work done under Alfonso's sponsorship was the compilation of the "Alfonsine Tables," which were published on the day of his ascension to the throne and remained the most authoritative planetary tables in existence for three centuries. The preparation of the tables was very laborious, and Alfonso remarked that if God had consulted him during the six days of creation, he would have recommended a less complicated design. (**Today in the Word**)

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LIFT UP THYSELF, MY SOUL

by Allen W. Chatfield

O Mind immutable!

O Light inscrutable!

Thine is the eye that guides the lightning fire,  
In Thee the ages live,  
Thou dost their limits give,  
Who can Thy praises reach, Eternal Sire?  
Thou art beyond the dreams of men;  
Beyond the reach of mind, or highest angel's ken.  
O'er all Thy rule is spread,  
The living and the dead;  
To minds that be, the parent Mind Thou art;  
All Heav'n Thou dost control,  
Thou nourishest the soul,  
And dost to spirit energy impart,  
The Spring Thou art whence all things flow;  
And from eternity the Root whence all things grow.

**Romans 11:35** [Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN?](#) ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [e tis proedoken \(3SAAI\) auto, kai antapodothesetai \(3SFPI\) auto?](#)

**Amplified:** Or who has first given God anything that he might be paid back or that he could claim a recompense? ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**ESV:** "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" ([ESV](#))

**ICB:** "No one has ever given God anything that he must pay back." Job 41:11 ([CB: Nelson](#))

**NIV:** "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" ([NIV - IBS](#))

**NKJV:** "Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?"

**NLT:** And who could ever give him so much that he would have to pay it back? ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** 'Or who has first given to him and it shall be repaid to him?' ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** or who has previously given to Him and it will be recompensed to him?

**Young's Literal:** or who did first give to Him, and it shall be given back to him again?

**OR WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN:** [e tis proedoken \(3SAAI\) auto kai antapodothesetai \(3SFPI\) auto:](#)

- Job 35:7; Matthew 20:15; 1Corinthians 4:7
- [Romans 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Job 35:7 "If you are righteous, what do you give to Him? Or what does He receive from your hand?"

Isaiah 40:14 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?

1Cor 4:7 For who regards you as superior? **And what do you have that you did not receive?** But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?



No one has ever made God obligated to him. What gift of ours would ever put the Eternal Self-Existent God in a position in which He were obligated to repay us?

"Who has ever given God something that he didn't already have?" Who has put God in his debt? "Why, everything we are and have comes from him. He gives to us; we don't give to him." There is nothing we could give to God that He doesn't already own or have in abundance.

**C. S. Lewis** - "To argue with God is to argue with the very power that makes it possible to argue at all!"

**Guzik** - You can try all you want - but you will never make God a debtor to you. You can't out-give God. He will never need to repay a debt to anyone. (Romans 11 Commentary)

Speaking to Job, **Jehovah** asks his choice suffering servant "Who has first given to Me, that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heavens is Mine. [Therefore, who can have a claim against God, God Who made the unmastered crocodile?] (Amplified, Job 41:11)

**Thomas Constable** comments that "Job's observation that God has never needed to depend on human assistance that puts Him in man's debt (Job 41:11) is also true. The fact that God makes people His partners in executing His will in the world does not mean that He cannot get along without us. He can. ([Expository Notes on the Bible](#))

**Hodge** - This is not to be confined to giving counsel or knowledge to God, but expresses the general idea that the creature can do nothing to place God under obligation. It will be at once perceived how appropriate is this thought, in reference to the doctrines which Paul had been teaching. Men are justified, not on the ground of their own merit, but of the merit of Christ; they are sanctified, not by the power of their own good purposes, and the strength of their own will, but by the Spirit of God; they are chosen and called to eternal life, not on the ground of anything in them, but according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. God, therefore, is the Alpha and the Omega of salvation. The creature has neither merit nor power. His hopes must rest on sovereign mercy alone. ([Romans 11 - Hodge's Commentary on Romans](#))

**Paid back... again** ([467](#)) (**antapodidomi** from **antí** = in turn + **apodidomi** = render <> from **apo** = from + **didomi** = give) means to give back in return for something received. The idea is to practice reciprocity with respect to an obligation (as repaying an obligation - Lk 14:14) thus practicing reciprocity with respect to the obligation. In a negative sense it means to take revenge, pay back, requite, exact retribution or give punishment that is deserved (Ro 12:19, He 10:30 both quoted from Deut 32:35).

**Antapodidomi** - 7 NT uses - Lk. 14:14; Rom. 11:35; 12:19; 1 Thess. 3:9; 2 Thess. 1:6; Heb. 10:30.

**Romans 11:36** For from Him and **through** Him and to Him are **all things**. To Him be the **glory forever**. **Amen**. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [hoti](#) ex [autou kai di' autou kai eis auton ta panta; auto e](#) doxa [eis tous aionas; amen](#).

**Amplified:** For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. [For all things originate with Him and come from Him; all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to consummate and to end in Him.] To Him be glory forever! Amen (so be it). ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**ESV:** For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. ([ESV](#))

**ICB:** Yes, God made all things. And everything continues through God and for God. To God be the glory forever! Amen. ([ICB: Nelson](#))

**NIV:** For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen. ([NIV - IBS](#))

**NKJV:** For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

**NLT:** For everything comes from him; everything exists by his power and is intended for his glory. To him be glory evermore. Amen. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things. To him be the glory for ever, amen. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** Because out from Him and through Him and for Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

**Young's Literal:** because of Him, and through Him, and to Him are the all things; to Him is the glory -- to the ages. Amen.

- 1Chronicles 29:11,12; Ps 33:6; Proverbs 16:4; Daniel 2:20, 21, 22, 23; 4:3,34; Matthew 6:13; Acts 17:25,26,28; 1Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6, 7, 8, 9, 10; Colossians 1:15, 16, 17; Revelation 21:6
- [Romans 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**For** - Always **pause** and **ponder** this important **term of explanation**. Remember the **context** of this great doxology - the primary focus which harmonizes with the Romans 9-11 is God's great plan of salvation through history, not just for Israel but for all mankind. And thus it is only fitting that Paul ascribe glory to Him Who is the **Source, Accomplisher, and Goal** of man's salvation, now and forevermore, world without end. Amen.

**Hodge** explains the "for" - The reason why man can lay God under no obligation is, that God is himself all and in all; the source, the means, and the end. By him all things are; through his power, wisdom, and goodness, all things are directed and governed; and to him, as their last end, all things tend. ([Romans 11 - Hodge's Commentary on Romans](#))

**Henry Alford** labeled this verse "the sublimest apostrophe existing even in the pages of inspiration itself."

**From Him** means God is the all-sufficient cause and source of everything. God is the Originator of all things. All things come from Him.

**Vincent** - *Of* (from) proceeding from as the source: **through**, by means of, as Maintainer, Preserver, Ruler: **to** or **unto**, He is the point to which all tends. All men and things are for His glory (1Cor 15:28).

**Denney** - **from Him**, as their source; **through Him**, as the power by whose continuous energy the world is sustained and ruled; **unto Him**, as their goal, for whose glory they exist. ([Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

**Matthew Poole** - all things are of him, as the efficient cause; through him, as the disposing cause; to him, as the final cause. They are of him, without any other motive; through him, without any assistance; and to him, without any other end, i.e. for his sake alone. ([Romans 11 - English Annotations on the Holy Bible](#))

**John Trapp** - For of him] As the efficient cause, and "through him" as the administering cause, and "to him" as the final cause, are all things. A wise philosopher could say, that man is the end of all in a semicircle; that is, all things in the world are made for him, and he is made for God. ([Romans 11 Commentary](#))

**Hodge** - The prepositions **ek** (from), **dia** (through) **eis** (to or unto) here used, indicate that God is the **Source**, the constantly working **Cause**, and **End** of all things.

**Moule** - Lit. out of Him; not in the Pantheistic sense, as if all things were evolved from God—phases of God; but in the Christian sense, that His will is the ultimate source of all being, all life and force, all conscience, will, and thought. ([Romans 11 Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges](#))

**Through Him** means God is the mighty sustainer and worker. All things depend on Him.

**Moule** - **through Him** - **by means of Him**. He is not the Source only, but the Means. He did not only originate all things, but incessantly sustains and overrules all. In the special case of the saints, He not only wills their salvation, but—through their regenerated will—gives them power to believe and persevere. "He keeps them, by His power, through faith, unto salvation." (1Peter 1:5. See too Php 2:13.) ([Ibid](#))

**Guzik** - **Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things**: "All these words are monosyllables. A child just learning to read could easily spell them out. But who shall exhaust their meaning?" (Meyer) It is all **of Him**: This plan came from God. It wasn't man's idea. We didn't say, "I've offended God and have to find a way back to Him. Let's work on a plan to come back to God." In our spiritual indifference and death we didn't care about a plan, and even if we did care we aren't smart enough or wise enough to make one. It is all of Him.. It is all **through Him**: Even if we had the plan, we couldn't make it happen. We couldn't free ourselves from this prison of sin and self. It could only happen through Him, and the great work of Jesus on our behalf is the through Him that brings salvation.. It is all **to Him**: It's not for me, it's not for you, it's all to Him. It is to the praise of the glory of His grace (Ephesians 1:6). It's for His pleasure that we are created, and we find our fulfillment in bringing Him glory and honor. **To whom be glory forever**: The fact that Paul can't figure out God makes him glorify God all the more. When we understand some of the greatness of God, we worship Him all the more passionately. (Romans 11 Commentary)

Paul wrote to the Colossians extolling our Lord Jesus Christ declaring that "For **by Him** all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created **by Him** and

**for Him.** And He is **before all things**, and **in Him all things hold together**. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. (See notes Col 1:16; 17; 18; 19; 20)

**A W Tozer** - An elementary but correct way to think of God is as the One Who contains all, Who gives all that is given, but Who Himself can receive nothing that He has not first given. (The Knowledge of the Holy)

Christ created all things, sustains all things and reconciles all things!

As **R Kent Hughes** reminds us "One second without God's power and everything would disappear!... Matter is not God, but God is in everything, and nothing works or exists except through his might." ([Hughes, R. K. Romans: Righteousness from heaven. Preaching the Word](#))

**Thomas Constable** - God is the source from which all things come, the means by which all things happen, and the goal toward which all things are moving. He is the originator, sustainer, and finisher of everything ultimately (cf. Col 1:16-note). In view of all these things (Ro 11:33-36), He deserves all glory forever. ([Tom Constable's Expository Notes on Romans 11](#))

**To Him** means God must call every creature to account to Him. All things flow toward God. He is the end purpose. All things will find their culmination in God. He is the reason why all things exist.

**Moule - to him** - To His glory. He is, to Himself, the Final Cause of all His works. He is greater, higher, nobler, and more precious, than His whole creation; and must view Himself as such: what else, then, but Himself could He make His aim and end? Cp. Colossians 1:16, for the same words, "through Him and to Him" used of the Eternal Son; one of the deepest proofs of His proper Deity. ([Ibid](#))

To help appreciate Paul's description of all things from Him, through Him and to Him, read Chuck Swindoll's description of our tiny solar system, keeping in mind Who it is all from...

Imagine a perfectly smooth glass pavement on which the finest speck can be seen. Then shrink our sun from 865,00 miles in diameter to only two feet ... and place the ball on the pavement to represent the sun. Step off 83 paces (about two feet per pace) and to represent proportionately the first planet, Mercury, put down a tiny mustard seed. Take 60 steps more and for Venus, put an ordinary BB. Mark 78 more steps ... put down a green pea representing Earth. Step off 108 paces from there, and for Mars put down a pinhead. Sprinkle around some fine dust for the asteroids, then take 788 steps more. For Jupiter, place an orange on the glass at that spot. After 934 more steps, put down a golf ball for Saturn. Now it gets really involved. Mark 2,086 steps, and for Uranus ... a marble. Another 2,322 steps from there you arrive at Neptune. Let a cherry represent Neptune. This will take 2 1/2 miles, and we haven't even discussed Pluto! If we swing completely around, we have a smooth, glass surface five miles in diameter, yet just a tiny fraction of the heavens—excluding Pluto. On this surface, five miles across, we have only a seed, BB, pea, pinhead, some dust, an orange, golf ball, a marble and a cherry. Guess how far we'd have to go on the same scale before we could put down another two-foot ball to represent the nearest star. Come on, guess. Seven hundred paces? Two thousand steps more? Forty-four hundred feet? No, you're way off. We'd have to go 6,720 miles before we could arrive at that star. Miles, not feet. And that's just the first star among millions. In one galaxy among perhaps hundreds, maybe thousands. And all of it in perpetual motion, perfectly synchronized, the most accurate timepiece known to man. (Swindoll, Chuck: Mind Under Matter. Publication of the First Evangelical Free Church, Fullerton, California)

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### A Simple Study... Through Him

Consider the following simple study - observe and record the wonderful truths that accrue **through Him** - this would make an edifying, easy to prepare Sunday School lesson - then take some time to give thanks for these great truths by offering up a sacrifice of praise... through Him.

Jn 1:3 [[NIV reads "through Him"](#)], Jn 1:7, John 1:10, Jn 3:17, Jn 14:6, Acts 2:22, 3:16, Acts 7:25, Acts 10:43, Acts 13:38, 39, Ro 5:9 [note], Ro 8:37 [note], Ro 11:36 [note]; 1Co 8:6, Ep 2:18 [note], Php 4:13 [note], Col 1:20 [note], Col 2:15 [note], Col 3:17 [note], Heb 7:25 [note], Heb 13:15 [note], 1Pe 1:21 [note], 1John 4:9

Would you like more study on the wonderful topic of **through Him**? Study also the NT uses of the parallel phrase **through Jesus**

(or similar phrases - "through Whom", "through our Lord", etc) - John 1:17, Acts 10:36, Ro 1:4, 5- note; Ro 1:8-note, Ro 2:16-note, Ro 5:1-note; Ro 5:2-note Ro 5:11-note, Ro 5:21-note, Ro 7:25-note, Ro 16:27-note, 1Cor 15:57, 2Cor 1:5, 3:4, 5:18, Gal 1:1, Eph 1:5-note, Php 1:11-note, 1Th 5:9-note; Titus 3:6-note, He 1:2-note; He 2:10-note, Heb 13:21-note, 1Pe 2:5-note, 1Pe 4:11-note, Jude 1:25)

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

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**Steven Cole** - The bottom line for contemplating how God has designed and controls all of history to display His faithfulness and mercy is: **Stand in awe of the faithful, merciful God.** Thinking about these profound truths moved Paul to burst out in worship (Ro 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 might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen."

We will look at those verses in more depth next time, but they teach us that this truth of God's sovereignty over salvation history is not for debate, but for worship. It should cause us to stand in awe of God and to thank Him for His faithfulness to His promises and to worship Him for showing us mercy.

**Conclusion - I conclude with seven practical applications. Some of these will apply more to some than to others, but as they say, "If the shoe fits, wear it!"**

(1) Make sure that you have received God's mercy by repenting of your sins and trusting in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. God has you hearing this message so that as you feel the weight of your sin and guilt, you can turn to Him and know His mercy.

(2) Grow in worship and humility before God as you meditate often on His sovereignty over history and on the mercy that He has shown you. These truths are not just for your brain, but for your heart before God. Humble yourself before the Almighty Sovereign of history.

(3) If you have received God's mercy, be merciful to other sinners who are racially or morally different than you, especially when they have sinned against you. Paul knew that the gospel should result in redeemed Gentile sinners extending mercy to Jewish sinners, and vice versa. Apart from God's mercy to you, you would be just as offensive to other sinners as they are toward you. They need mercy, not judgment.

(4) Rely on God's faithfulness to His promises no matter how contrary to your current circumstances those promises may seem. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all died in faith, without receiving the promises (Heb. 11:13). Don't stop trusting when you don't see instant results.

(5) Since in the inscrutable ways of God the destiny of your children and grandchildren is somehow linked to your faith, make sure that for their sakes you walk with God. The disobedience of the Jews in the time of Christ has affected 2,000 years of Jewish history! How frightening! And as Paul has said (11:22), if we Gentiles do not continue in God's kindness, we (and our descendants) could be cut off. Your walk with God matters to more than just you!

(6) Tell others about God's great mercy and faithfulness toward sinners who will call upon Him. His purpose in shutting us all up in disobedience is that He might show mercy to all. He is "abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; for 'whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved'" (Rom. 10:12b-13).

(7) If you reject Christ, you are an enemy of God. The Jews were God's enemies because they had rejected the Savior that He had graciously sent. Right now, you're either the object of God's mercy through faith in Christ or you're His enemy, headed toward judgment, because you have rejected Christ. There is no neutral ground. The most loving thing I can say to you is, "Trust in Christ today!"

### **Application Questions**

1 Someone argues, "If God designed and controls history, then He is the author of sin." How would you refute this biblically?

2 Some argue that verse 32 means that God will save everyone. How would you rebut this error (from Scripture)?

3 How can you know whether you're maintaining the biblical balance between God's sovereignty and human responsibility?

4 How can we have a deeper experience of God's mercy? [Stand in Awe](#)

## TO HIM BE THE GLORY FOREVER AMEN: auto e doxa eis tous aionas; amen

- Ro 16:27; Ps 29:1,2; 96:7,8; 115:1; Isaiah 42:12; Luke 2:14; 19:38; Galatians 1:5; Ephesians 3:21; Philippians 4:20; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16; 2 Timothy 4:18; Hebrews 13:21; 1 Peter 5:11; 2 Peter 3:18; Jude 1:25; Revelation 1:5,6; 4:10,11; 5:12, 13, 14; 7:10; 19:1,6,7
- [Romans 11 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Moule** - **to Him be the glory**; the glory due to Him. Same words as Ro 16:27; Gal 1:5; Php 4:20; 2Ti 4:18; Heb 13:21; and nearly the same as 2Peter 3:18; Rev 1:6. In the last two passages the ascription is to the Eternal Son. See Rev 1:5.

**Chris Tomlin's** [Glory in the Highest](#)

**Glory** ([1391](#))(**doxa** from **dokeo** = to think) in simple terms means to give a proper opinion or estimate of something and thus the glory of God expresses all that He is in His Being and in His nature, character, power and acts. He is glorified when He is allowed to be seen as He really is. To be where God is will be glory. To be what God intended will be glory. To do what God purposed will be glory.

**Charles Ryrie** says that the **glory** of God "is the manifestation of any or all of His attributes. In other words, it is the displaying of God to the world. Thus, things which glorify God are things which show the characteristics of His being to the world."

**Spurgeon** words on giving God **glory** will surely move you to take a moment today and do so and then to contemplate how you might live your life daily to His glory. Herein is a powerful devotional exhortation ([read also his preceding words on doctrine which prompted such devotion](#)) from one of God's sweetest singers...

I think that this sentence should be the prayer, the motto for every one of us- "To whom be glory for ever, Amen."

**To whom be glory for ever.** This should be the single desire of the Christian. I take it that he should not have twenty wishes, but only one. He may desire to see his family well brought up, but only that - **To God may be glory for ever.**

He may wish for prosperity in his business, but only so far as it may help him to promote this-**To whom be glory for ever.**

He may desire to attain more gifts and more graces, but it should only be that**To him may be glory for ever.**

This one thing I know, Christian, you are not acting as you ought to do when you are moved by any other motive than the one motive of your Lord's glory. As a Christian, you are **of God, and through God**, I pray you be **to God**. Let nothing ever set your heart beating but love to Him. Let this ambition fire your soul; be this the foundation of every enterprise upon which you enter, and this your sustaining motive whenever your zeal would grow chill-only, only make God your object.

**Depend upon it, where self begins sorrow begins;** but if God be my supreme delight and only object,

"To me 'tis equal whether love ordain  
My life or death-appoint me ease or pain."

To me there shall be no choice, when my eye singly looks to God's glory, whether I shall be torn in pieces by wild beasts or live in comfort-whether I shall be full of despondency or full of hope. **If God be glorified in my mortal body, my soul shall rest content.**

Again, let it be our constant desire, **To him be glory.** When I wake up in the morning, O, let my soul salute her God with gratitude.

[Wake, and lift up thyself, my heart,](#)

And with the angels bear thy part,  
Who all night long unwearied sing  
High praises to the eternal King.

At my work behind the counter, or in the exchange, let me be looking out to see how I may glorify Him. If I be walking in the fields, let my desire be that the trees may clap their hands in His praise. May the sun in His march shine out the Master's glory, and the stars at night reflect His praise. It is yours, brethren, to put a tongue into the mouth of this dumb world, and make the silent beauties of creation praise their God. Never be

silent when there are opportunities, and you shall never be silent for want of opportunities.

At night fall asleep still praising your God; as you close your eyes let your last thought be, "How sweet to rest upon the Savior's bosom!"

In afflictions praise Him; out of the fires let your song go up; on the sick-bed extol Him; dying, let Him have your sweetest notes. Let your shouts of victory in the combat with the last great enemy be all for Him; and then when you have **burst the bondage of mortality**, and come into the freedom of immortal spirits, then, in a nobler, sweeter song, you shall sing unto His praise. Be this, then, your constant thought- **To him be glory for ever.**

Let this be your earnest thought. Do not speak of God's glory with cold words, nor think of it with chilly heart, but feel,

I must praise him; if I cannot praise him where I am, I will break through these narrow bonds, and get where I can.

Sometimes you will feel that you long to be disembodied that you may praise Him as the immortal spirits do. I must praise Him. Bought by His precious blood, called by His Spirit, I cannot hold my tongue. My soul, canst thou be dumb and dead? I must praise Him. Stand back, O flesh; avaunt, ye fiends; away, ye troubles; I must sing, for should I refuse to sing, sure the very stones would speak.

I hope, dear friends, whilst thus earnest your praise will also be growing. Let there be growing desire to praise Him of Whom and through Him are all things. You blessed Him in your youth, do not be content with such praises as you gave Him then. Has God prospered you in business? give Him more as He has given you more. Has God given you experience? O, praise Him by better faith than you exercised at first. Does your knowledge grow? Oh! then you can sing more sweetly. Do you have happier times than you once had? Have you been restored from sickness, and has your sorrow been turned into peace and joy? Then give Him more music; put more coals in your censer, more sweet frankincense, more of the sweet cane bought with money. Oh! to serve Him every day, lifting up my heart from Sabbath to Sabbath, till I reach the ever-ending Sabbath! Reaching from sanctification to sanctification, from love to love, from strength to strength, till I appear before my God!

**In closing, let me urge you to make this desire practical.** If you really glorify God, take care to do it not with lip-service, which dies away in the wind, but with solid homage of daily life.

Praise Him by your patience in pain, by your perseverance in duty, by your generosity in his cause, by your boldness in testimony, by your consecration to His work; praise him, my dear friends, not only this morning in what you do for Him in your offerings, but praise Him every day by doing something for God in all sorts of ways, according to the manner in which He has been pleased to bless you.

I wish I could have spoken worthily on such a topic as this, but a dull, heavy headache sits upon me, and I feel that a thick gloom overshadows my words, out of which I look with longing, but cannot rise. For this I may well grieve, but nevertheless God the Holy Ghost can work the better through our weakness, and if you will try and preach the sermon to yourselves, my brethren, you will do it vastly better than I can; if you will **meditate** upon this text this afternoon, "Of him, through Him, and to Him are all things," I am sure you will be led to fall on your knees with the apostle, and say, "To Him be glory for ever;" and then you will rise up, and practically in your life, give Him honor, putting the "Amen" to this doxology by your own individual service of your great and gracious Lord. May He give a blessing now, and accept your thank-offering through Christ Jesus. ([Romans 11:36 Laus Deo or Duo sermon](#))

**To Him be the glory...** indeed let us...

1 [Praise the LORD! Praise God in His sanctuary;](#)

Praise Him in His mighty expanse.

2 Praise Him for His mighty deeds;

Praise Him according to His excellent greatness.

3 Praise Him with trumpet sound;

Praise Him with harp and lyre.

4 Praise Him with timbrel and dancing;

Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe.

5 Praise Him with loud cymbals;

Praise Him with resounding cymbals.

6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD!

I love **J Vernon McGee's** comment on this last phrase "**To whom be glory**"—the glory belongs to Him in all ages. Are we robbing God of His glory by taking credit for things we have no business to claim? The glory belongs to Him. Oh, my friend, what a section of Scripture we have been in, and we leave it reluctantly." ([Romans 11 Commentary- multiple Mp3's on this chapter from Thru the Bible](#))

**Hodge** - Such is the appropriate conclusion of the doctrinal portion of this wonderful epistle; in which more fully and clearly than in any other portion of the word of God, the plan of salvation is presented and defended. Here are the doctrines of grace; doctrines on which the pious in all ages and nations have rested their hopes of heaven, though they may have had comparatively obscure intimations of their nature. The leading principle of all is, that God is the source of all good; that in fallen man there is neither merit nor ability; that salvation, consequently, is all of grace, as well sanctification as pardon, as well election as eternal glory. For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to Whom be glory for ever. Amen. ([Romans 11 - Hodge's Commentary on Romans](#))

**Amen** (4243)(amen [OT = **Amen** (0543) amen]) is a transliteration of the Hebrew noun amen and then into Latin and into English and many other languages, so that it is practically a universal word. Amen has been called the best-known word in human speech. To say "Amen" confirms a statement by someone else. Amen is a response to something that has just been said, except in Jesus' teachings. Jesus, the ultimate "Amen" (Rev 3:14), is the supreme authority and so it is clearly apropos that His teachings be introduced by amen. John's Gospel has 25 uses of "amen" and every use is a double amen (or double "truly" in the NAS - 25 times). None of the other 3 Gospels use a "double amen." It is also notable that in the four Gospels, amen is used only by our Lord Jesus Christ, almost always "to introduce new revelations of the mind of God." (Vine) Every use of "amen" or "truly" by Jesus serves to affirm what follows and by extension to cause us to pay close attention to the teaching. The Pauline uses of amen occur primarily at the close of his prayers or doxologies, and as such serve to confirm them as "it is firm" (or "so let it be").

**Forever** - literally this reads "to the ages." **Moule** - "through all future periods and developements of existence. Same words as Romans 9:6."

**Forever** (165)(aion) as implied by the numerous ways it is translated into English is somewhat difficult to define. The specific meaning of **aion** is best determined by the context in which it is used and in this verse clearly means forever.

**C H Spurgeon** writes the following devotional on Romans 11:36...

"To whom be glory for ever. Amen" — Romans 11:36

"To whom be glory for ever." This should be the single desire of the Christian. All other wishes must be subservient and tributary to this one. The Christian may wish for prosperity in his business, but only so far as it may help him to promote this—"To him be glory for ever." He may desire to attain more gifts and more graces, but it should only be that "To him may be glory for ever." You are not acting as you ought to do when you are moved by any other motive than a single eye to your Lord's glory. As a Christian, you are "of God, and through God," then live "to God." Let nothing ever set your heart beating so mightily as love to him. Let this ambition fire your soul; be this the foundation of every enterprise upon which you enter, and this your sustaining motive whenever your zeal would grow chill; make God your only object. Depend upon it, where self begins sorrow begins; but if God be my supreme delight and only object,

"To me 'tis equal whether love ordain  
My life or death—appoint me ease or pain."

Let your desire for God's glory be a growing desire. You blessed him in your youth, do not be content with such praises as you gave him then. Has God prospered you in business? Give him more as he has given you more. Has God given you experience? Praise him by stronger faith than you exercised at first. Does your knowledge grow? Then sing more sweetly. Do you enjoy happier times than you once had? Have you been restored from sickness, and has your sorrow been turned into peace and joy? Then give him more music; put more coals and more sweet frankincense into the censer of your praise. Practically in your life give him honour, putting the "Amen" to this doxology to your great and gracious Lord, by your own individual service and increasing holiness. (Spurgeon, C. H. Morning and evening : Daily readings November 17 AM).

**F B Meyer** commenting on "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things" writes that...

This verse reminds us of those lagoons of perfectly still clear water, of which travellers tell. So clear, that it is easily possible to look into their translucent depths to where the submarine foliage waves! So deep, that the ordinary measuring line fails to plumb them! All these words are monosyllables. A child just learning to read could easily spell them out. But who shall exhaust their meaning?

Of Him. — The entire scheme of redemption; the marvellous history of the chosen people, with which this chapter is occupied; the universe of matter, all are included in the all things that have emanated out of God. No one has been his counsellor, or given aught to Him. From all created things, which are as the stream, let us climb to Him, who is their fountain, source, and origin; and in Him let us learn to fill our own souls to the very brim.

Through Him. — Through Jesus Christ, the Mediator, God has poured the entire grace and wealth of his nature to bless and help us. There is no good thing that does not come to us through the mediator, of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. Through Him He made the worlds. Through Him we have received the reconciliation. Through Him, also, all grace is made to abound towards us. Never forget to magnify the Lord Jesus as the source of all your supply.

To Him. — Creation, Providence, Redemption, are all tending back to God. The tide is setting in towards the throne. A revenue of glory shall ye accrue from all that has happened within the parenthesis of time. Every whit in the great temple shall one day say "Glory!" (Our Daily Homily)

Let us join with the hymn writer Horatius Bonar and sing out (play the hymn)...

### [GLORY BE TO THE GOD THE FATHER](#)

Glory be to God the Father,  
Glory be to God the Son,  
Glory be to God the Spirit,  
Great Jehovah, Three in One!  
Glory, glory, glory, glory,  
While eternal ages run!

Glory be to Him Who loved us,  
Washed us from each spot and stain!  
Glory be to Him Who bought us,  
Made us kings with Him to reign!  
Glory, glory, glory, glory,  
To the Lamb that once was slain!

Glory to the King of angels,  
Glory to the church's King,  
Glory to the King of nations!  
Heaven and earth, your praises bring;  
Glory, glory, glory, glory,  
To the King of glory bring!

"Glory, blessing, praise eternal!"  
Thus the choir of angels sings;  
"Honor, riches, power, dominion!"  
Thus its praise creation brings;  
Glory, glory, glory, glory,  
Glory to the King of kings!