

Doxology

Giving Praise to the Incomprehensible God of Salvation

Romans 11:33-36

Sunday, November 10, 2019

Introduction

Every Christian has a different story of how they came to faith. For some, faith came early and before there was a chance to see their sin nature and rebellion exposed in any shocking ways. For others conversion was more outwardly dramatic and led to a very definite change of lifestyle. But as we consider what the Bible says about the nature of our hearts and our need for salvation, the fact that any of us are Christians today is truly amazing. It is a testament to the matchless grace and mercy of God and His plan of salvation that is beyond our ability to fully comprehend or understand.

As we come to the doxology of Romans 11 Paul is concluding a long and detailed survey of God's plan of salvation and as he brings this incredible treatise to an end he breaks into this doxology extoling the God of salvation.

The Context of Paul's Doxology

While Paul's doxology can stand alone in praising the character and attributes of God, its' true weight can only be recognized with an understanding of all that has come before it in chapters 1-11. Paul clearly recognizes that God's character is incomprehensible and it's in His character that His perfect plan of salvation finds its' origin.

Paul's Praise for our Incomprehensible God

- **Paul's Exclamation** – While much of Romans appears on the surface to be a theological treatise, as we come to 11:33 there is no doubt of how personal the content of this letter is for Paul. He begins the doxology with an exclamation of awe and wonder as he writes *Oh!*
- **God's attributes are beyond measure** – As Paul considers God's riches, wisdom and knowledge he speaks of their depths. God's attributes are beyond measure – we cannot grasp their full scope.
- **The Depth of God's Riches** - While God is immeasurably rich in every way (He owns everything) in this context Paul wants us to consider the riches of His character in regards to salvation. As Paul thinks about God's mercy, grace and kindness shown in the Gospel, he sees it as abounding and full and without limit (Ephesians 3:6-9, Romans 2:3-4).
 - **Our inability to earn the benefit of God's riches** – In verse 35 Paul quotes Job 41:11 to emphasize that there is nothing that we can do to earn God's favor. He is rich in grace and mercy and it is not something we can ever earn on our own.

- **The Depth of God's Knowledge** – God's knowledge cannot be measured. He is omniscient (all-knowing) and it's out of this knowledge that His plan and work of salvation are born.
- **The Depth of God's Wisdom** – Wisdom is the application or the right use of knowledge. Not only does God know all things, but He also has the wisdom to use His knowledge perfectly. As Paul considers God's plan of salvation He is sure that God's wisdom is beyond measure.
 - **The futility of questioning God's wisdom and knowledge** – In verse 34 Paul quotes two questions from Isaiah 40, one corresponding to God's wisdom and the other to His knowledge. Both questions reveal how far above us God is in every way and how futile it is for us to ever question His ways (Isaiah 40:12-14).
- **The Unsearchable Nature of God's Judgments** – As Paul considers God's plan of salvation he is fully aware that God's decisions are beyond our understanding.
 - **Colin Kruse** – *No one would have anticipated that God would effect salvation through the death of His Son on a cross. No one would have anticipated that God would bring salvation to the Gentiles through the disobedience of Israel, or that the blessings enjoyed by Gentiles would lead to salvation for Israel, [yet this is exactly what He has done].*
- **The Untraceable Nature of God's Ways** – As we consider God's plan of salvation there may be times when we are tempted to question Him, but we must remember that His plan is perfect. We may not understand it, but it is always good and right (Romans 9:14-21).

Paul's Praise for God as the Source, Supplier and Reason for Salvation

- **From Him and through Him and to Him** – While all things find their source and reason in God, in this context we recognize this is true of God's plan of salvation. He is the one who gives us faith, sustains our faith and all the glory for our salvation is His. To God be glory!

Conclusion – As we consider the work of God in salvation and all that He has done to extend the offer of salvation to all people of all nations we should stand in awe. We should join Paul in extoling the incomprehensible nature of our God. It should also encourage us to share with the world this unbelievable message that God has so graciously made available.