



Romans 11:33-36

# TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

*God is the **source** of all things, the **means** by which all things are accomplished, and the **goal** of all things. Since He is the source and means of all things, no one could possibly function as His counselor or expect payment for some service rendered. God is the giver of wisdom to human beings, not the recipient of wisdom from them; God is the one who gives all things to us, not the one who receives benefits from human hands. Not only is God the source of all things and the means by which all things are accomplished, but He is also the goal of all things. The purpose for which the world was created is God's purpose. It is fitting, therefore, that the text ends with an acclamation of God's glory. The one from whom and through whom and to whom are all things deserves all the glory. The salvation of Jews and Gentiles is penultimate. What is ultimate is the glory of God. Worship is the concluding word.*

—Thomas R. Schreiner

In Romans 9-11, Paul is specifically addressing Jewish believers who are wondering why more Jews have not responded to the gospel, why so many Gentiles are coming into the church, and why God has seemingly set aside the nation of Israel.

Here is a summary of Paul's answer to these Jewish believers:

## **I wish more of my fellow Jews were coming to Christ (9:1-5).**

- I am in great anguish over the unbelief of my Jewish brethren.
- As Jews, we are richly blessed by God...and the greatest blessing is to be the people from whom the Messiah came.

## **The issue is not that God is unfaithful to His promises (9:6-13).**

- You don't receive God's promised blessings just because you have the genes of Abraham, just consider Ishmael and Esau.
- You don't receive God's promised blessings by your own good works or as something that you deserve, just consider Jacob.

## **The issue is not that God is somehow unfair to us (9:14-29).**

- God is free to give the gifts of His mercy and grace to whomever He wants since they are totally undeserved.
- God is free to harden someone further, for His purposes, since all of us have already hardened our hearts against Him.
- God is free to do as He wills as our Creator and Lord.
- If God chooses to save only a few for His own gracious purposes that is totally fair since absolutely none of us deserve it.

## **No, the issue is Israel's own stubborn unbelief (9:30-10:21).**

- Israel tried to pursue God's righteousness apart from faith.
- Israel stumbled over the Messiah, just as the OT predicted.
- Israel tried to earn God's righteousness through the law.
- Israel missed the simplicity of the gospel of Christ offered to all.
- Israel heard and understood but chose not to believe.

*Romans 9-11 is full of problems as a hedgehog is full of prickles. Many have given it up as a bad job, leaving Romans as a book with eight chapters of gospel at the beginning, four of application at the end, and three of puzzle in the middle.*

—N. T. Wright

*The central issue in these chapters [Romans 9-11] is not predestination, nor is it even the salvation of Israel. At the forefront of Paul's thinking is God's faithfulness to His promises.*

—Thomas R. Schreiner

*Paul's sorrow for his people is a spark from the fire of Christ's substitutionary love.*

*God's hardening of Pharaoh was a judicial act, abandoning him to his stubbornness, much as God's wrath against the ungodly is expressed by "giving them over" to their own depravity (1:24-28).*

—John R. W. Stott

*The foreordination of God in no way interferes with the responsibility of man. I have often been asked to reconcile these two truths. My only reply is... "Why should I try to reconcile two friends?"*

—Charles H. Spurgeon

**BUT that does not mean that God is done with Israel (11:1-32)**

- Though the nation as a whole has been hardened against God, He has still chosen to save and preserve a remnant of Jewish believers.
- God is even using the salvation of the Gentiles to make the Jews envious, as the OT predicted, and to save some of them.
- (And Gentiles, don't you get proud and boastful and commit the same sin as Israel. God can remove His blessing from you as well.)
- In the end, God will save Israel, just as He promised in the OT.
- So, at the present time, the Jews may reject the gospel, and even resist you, but they are still to be loved as God's chosen people.
- God's perfect righteousness has condemned all people in sin in order that His immeasurable mercy might be shown to all people as well.

**Whether Jew or Gentile, we all can exclaim God's praise! (11:33-36)**

- His eternal redemptive plan is far beyond our ability to fathom it.
- All we can do is stand in awe and give Him all the glory!

Romans 9-11 is rich in theological truth, so rich that we can never fully plumb its depths. But we should try! Calvinism is a theological system which has sought to understand God's redemptive plan.

**Total Depravity.** Sin has affected us completely. We are all dead in sin.

**Unconditional Election.** God chooses and saves us entirely out of grace.

**Limited Atonement.** Jesus died specifically for the elect.

**Irresistible Grace.** When God chooses to save us, we will be saved.

**Perseverance of the Saints.** The elect will continue in faith to the end.

Calvinism is a strong theology built on a solid biblical foundation but it is not perfect nor does it have all of God's ways figured out. I would suggest a different formulation of the TULIP acronym.

**Radical Corruption.** Sin has affected us all to the core of our being.

**Omnipotent-Omniscient-Omnibenevolent Election.** God has chosen us and saved us out of His all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving grace.

**Sufficient Atonement.** Christ's death has atoned for the sin of the world.

**Immeasurable Grace.** God's grace to humanity cannot be fully grasped.

**Eternal Security.** The grace that saves us will definitely keep us.

Regardless of one's view, we should end up where Paul ends up in Romans 9-11, acknowledging our own finite understanding and exclaiming the incomprehensible wisdom and knowledge of God!

*God's saving mercy is shown to all. The perfect, satisfactory work of Christ in His death and resurrection has met the demands of the justice and holiness of God, and thereby has removed every barrier to forgiveness for all, and any person who seeks forgiveness and salvation will receive it.*

—John MacArthur, Jr.

*Verse 32 sums up the discussion of chapter 11 and Romans 9-11 as a whole. —Thomas Schreiner*

*If God lives in the Eternal Now, then He has always had not just the knowledge of but experience with every individual. So there has never been a moment in eternity when God has not had the experience of every elect person being convicted, accepting God's completion of their faith, conversion, sanctification, glorification, and their eternal praise and worship in the new heaven and the new earth.*

—Richard Land

*Those who confine God's love exclusively to the elect appear to me to take a narrow, contracted view of God's character and attributes. I have long come to the conclusion that men may be more systematic in their statements than the Bible, and may be led into grave error by idolatrous veneration of a system...*

*Jesus loves all mankind, came into the world for all, died for all, provided redemption sufficient for all, calls on all, invites all, commands all to repent and believe; and ought to be offered to all—freely, fully, unreservedly, directly, unconditionally... If I did not hold this, I dare not get into a pulpit, and I should not understand how to preach the Gospel.*

—J.C. Ryle (1816-1900)