

Romans 11:33-36

³³Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable are his judgments
and how untraceable his ways!

³⁴“For who has known the mind of the Lord,
or who has been his adviser?”

³⁵“Or who has first given to God
that he will be repaid?”

³⁶For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever! Amen.

To God Alone Be the Glory

I.

This is a time when it is natural for a person to be out of sorts. However much or little Covid has affected you, everyone’s life has been upended to some extent.

Impatience is in the air. Some have had it longer than others. If you are like most people, you just wish things could get back to normal, even though you know it’s not going to happen immediately.

Impatience leads to assigning blame. Public officials are an easy and handy target. They have made all kinds of decisions and recommendations and even mandates. Should certain businesses be *allowed* to open? How about schools? How about sports? Every decision is second-guessed. Others blame China, where the virus originated.

Ever since the Garden of Eden people have been pointing the finger of blame. Think back to how our first parents responded when confronted with their sin. Adam pointed at Eve. Eve pointed to the snake. But ultimately, their fingers were pointed at God. “*You* put this woman here with me, God.” “*You* are the One who made the snake.” They blamed God. *God* was the source of all their problems.

II.

It *always* comes back to that—every single time. Why?

Adam and Eve were convinced by Satan that *they* knew better than God. It seemed logical to their puny human intellect that *they*, like God, ought to know both good and evil. It isn’t as though they were stupid, too young and inexperienced to know any better. God had created them as fully grown, fully functional, fully understanding human beings. They just thought they knew better.

Like our first parents, we *pretend* to have superior intellect and understanding. It seems obvious to us that things should be different. It is patently *obvious* that government officials should have chosen this course of action or that, according to *my* understanding of things. And ultimately, like Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden, it is patently obvious that *God* should have done things differently with the current pandemic, too.

We know and understand how things should work. We know better, *obviously!*

“Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his adviser?” (Romans 11:34, EHV). Paul’s words in our text put us to shame. Has God ever needed our advice? Has he ever needed to ask *us* to help him figure out something about which he just couldn’t come to any conclusion?

Human beings are captive to the moment. The older we are, the more history we have to draw on, but our memories of that history are flawed—our own perceptions may have been incorrect in the first place. Then there is our ability to look into the future. The future is fuzzy, at best, to our limited understanding.

How is it, then, that our prayers make demands of God, rather than asking that his will be

done? It is absurd for us to think that *God* ought to bend *his* will to ours, but that is the effect of prayers that make demands of God. When we look at things *that way*, it seems obviously absurd. Still...we do it all the time.

III.

“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how untraceable his ways!” (Romans 11:33, EHV).

Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Every human being since—other than Jesus—has been conceived and born already a sinner. Every human being has willfully committed many, many other sins, as well.

What human being would have *ever* come up with the plan of salvation the Heavenly Father conceived? What human being could have considered that death on a cross used by the Roman government to carry out the death penalty for a criminal could be—or *would* be—the means by which mankind’s salvation would be won?

Such a plan had to be brilliantly conceived and flawlessly executed. There was no other way.

It took a special human being. It took Jesus, a human being that was conceived by the Holy Spirit in a miraculous way so that he could be born completely sin-free. It took a human being who was not just 100% human, but also 100% God to continue throughout his life sin-free. Then, as Paul puts it elsewhere, “God made him, who did not know sin, to become sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21, EHV). God treated the perfect, holy, sin-free Jesus as if he were sin personified. Jesus *became* sin itself so that he could serve as the perfect sacrifice for sin God demanded—“The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29, EHV).

Never in the history of the world has the Father displayed his love for mankind more fully than he did on the cross of Calvary. *That* love is so much more complete than anything we might *think* he *ought* to do for us in any one, particular moment of time. He gave us eternity!

IV.

Nope. That God who came up with that flawless plan and sent his only-begotten Son into the world to carry it out does not need any advise from us, “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever!” (Romans 11:36, EHV).

To God alone be all glory. *God* has done it all. God *does* see the future with absolute precision and without any fuzziness.

“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how untraceable his ways!” (Romans 11:33, EHV). We will *never* understand everything about God and his ways and his wisdom on this side of heaven.

But we *can* and *should* spend a lifetime learning more and more. The Apostle Peter wrote: “We also have the completely reliable prophetic word. You do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the Morning Star rises in your hearts, ²⁰since we know this above all else: No prophecy of Scripture comes about from someone’s own interpretation. ²¹In fact, no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were being carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:19-21, EHV).

Sometimes we *think* we ought to know more. Sometimes we would *like* to know more. But God gave writers who recorded the books of the Bible for us so that we would have all that we need to know about his plan of salvation. We would do well to pay attention to it.

“To him be the glory forever!” (Romans 11:36, EHV).

Amen.