
a *Grace Notes* course

The Epistle to the ROMANS

an expositional Bible study

by Dr. Daniel Hill, Pastor
Southwood Bible Church
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Lesson 11

Romans 11:1-36

Grace Notes

Web Site: <http://www.gracenotes.info>

E-mail: wdoud@gracenotes.info

The Epistle to the Romans

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Chapter 11

INTRODUCTION:

In chapters 9 and 10 Paul has established the way of Faith that is extended even to Israel. Having rejected their king and His kingdom, some may think that God is finished with Israel. But that is not the case.

Romans 10 describes God's desire for Jews to be saved even during the Church Age and then goes on to show that God will again deal specifically with Israel in the Tribulation period.

PRINCIPLE: God's promise to His Old Testament people has not changed, God is immutable, not subject to change. His promise is sure.

Numbers 23:19 God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?

Romans 11:1

I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

Paul uses three arguments to show that God is faithful even to unfaithful Israel.

1. Himself as a Jew who has believed in Christ, v 1b
2. A historical illustration during the time of Elijah, a time of great apostasy in Israel (the northern kingdom), v 2-4
3. A present illustration that looks to God preserving a remnant in every generation, v 5-10

So the question is asked and answered:

God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be.

An absolute rejection of the very thought that God would change His mind.

Why do we change our minds? Because things happen that are out of our control, because

circumstances change and we are not prepared for the change. Because we are surprised by the decisions and actions of others.

But God is not subject to change because God is not subject to surprise.

In His omniscience He knows all that is knowable and all the alternative and His plan is greater.

It was not surprise to God that Israel rejected her King and His Kingdom.

So his first illustration is personal.

Paul was an Israelite, of the tribe of Benjamin, a descendant of Abraham and he was saved!

PRINCIPLE: Anyone, in any generation, Jew or Gentile can put faith alone in Christ alone and be saved.

Now Paul goes back to the time of Elijah...

Romans 11:2

God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?

This is taken from I Kings 19 when Elijah the prophet is fleeing for his life from Jezebel, the evil Gentile heathen queen of the northern kingdom.

He just defeated all the prophets of Baal but now fears one woman...ran all the way to Mt. Sina.

In his depression he complains to God:

I Kings 19:10 And he said, I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, torn down Thine altars and killed Thy prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

In response to this first complaint God takes Elijah into a cave and allows him to see the power of nature. A wind so strong it tore the rocks apart, an earthquake, and fire.

But God was not in these.

Then the prophet heard a gentle blowing. This gentle breeze was the Holy Spirit and this showed Elijah that he must depend upon the Holy Spirit as his source of hope and protection.

Romans 11:3

Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, they have torn down Thine altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life.

But in the next verse (1 Kings 19:14) the prophet repeats his complaint: Then he said, I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, torn down Thine altars and killed Thy prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

So the Lord promises in 1 Kings 19:15-17 that He will deal with those who desire to kill His prophets and the Lord also has Elijah anoint Elisha as the next prophet. Then the Lord tells this frightened prophet:

1 Kings 19:18 Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.

Romans 11:4

I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

PRINCIPLE: In human viewpoint we may think there is no hope. That we alone are left. But God will preserve a remnant even when we are not aware of it.

Three things we see from the illustration of Elijah:

1. We too often forget that human knowledge is limited. We do not see very clearly and we do not understand all the issues. Elijah thought he understood it all but he did not. When God is in control (which He always is) things are never as bad as they seem. Our knowledge does not encompass the knowledge of God.
2. We too often forget about God's unlimited power. Elijah forgot how powerful God was, that God was more powerful than the circumstances. We may see what is going on in the world and we may think that God has lost the battle but He never does. God cannot lose because He uses the opposition against Him to win. Elijah had no reason to despair nor do we.
3. We too often forget about life's unmixable principles. If salvation is by grace then it can't be by works. If by works then it cannot be by

grace. If salvation is by grace then we are not kept secure by works. Elijah came to a point where he thought he deserved something better, perhaps because he was so brave in the face of the prophets of Baal. But whenever man begins to think he deserves better he is trying to put God into his debt. But you can't mix works and grace. And the only thing we have to meet grace is faith.

Paul brings this historical illustration to a current application:

Romans 11:5

In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice.

In the same way...indicates that God is not working in different ways at different times. We may have dispensational differences but the faithfulness of God is eternal.

GOD'S GRACIOUS CHOICE: Gracious Election, Remember that election comes out of God's foreknowledge and gives the believing sinner a way into the family of God.

This is grace, it is not a sovereign choice of God nor is it a method of works by man.

It is God providing a place in His family for the one He knew would believe in His Son for salvation.

ILLUSTRATION: When you send out an invitation to a dinner party with an RSVP you wait the response. And when you receive a response, that someone is accepting, what do you do? You set a place at the table for them.

God has set a place at the table for us, and that place was set from eternity past because God in His foreknowledge knew that you would accept His RSVP.

So Paul says there were thousands in Elijah's day and there are thousands perhaps in the city of Rome alone who are saved by faith and live by faith, not bowing the knee to Caesar.

Romans 11:6

But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

Systems of Works:

1. With legalism. Instead of being holy as God is holy and living by faith, we live by petty rules and regulations. When we achieve a measure of success in these we pat ourselves on the back and convince ourselves that we have met the demands of righteousness.
2. By a rigid system of Law: Many believers today who would deny any association with legalism live by the Law of the Bible as a means through obedience of arriving at God's righteousness.

They are constantly wanting to go back to some law system, the OT Law, the Sermon on the Mount, the Gospels, verses extracted from the context of the epistles as their rules for life and godliness.

This places a heavy emphasis on obedience but not as we have studied an obedience that comes from faith.

3. Emotions: Emotions are used to fool one's self into thinking that because you feel good, feel close to God, you are.

Emotions are wonderful if they are responding to the knowledge of God's Righteousness. And if you are your emotional expression will be pure and will not be self centered.

4. Closely associated with emotionalism is ritual: The adherence to a rigid ritual system whereby the believer performs certain functions and in doing so feels spiritually satisfied and thinks that he or she has impressed God.
5. Benevolence can become a human system of righteousness in which the Christian thinks that by doing good for others and helping others he or she is serving God.

Now benevolence and helping others is much needed and is a vital function of the local church but this function follows faith, it does not replace it.

6. Christian activism: Many believers today think they have the Righteousness of God when they go out and fight for a cause that they have assumed is God's cause.

The more they march, the more they picket, the more they are arrested, the more righteous they assume they are.

Realize there were probably more social ills and social causes the believers of the first century could have gotten involved in than there are today and yet they did not. Now when we have the right and freedom to vote, to help in the process we do but not as a means of attaining righteousness.

7. Psychology: This is one of the big ones among evangelicals today. They reinterpret God's righteousness in terms of psychology.

Now the fascination many believers have with psychology comes about because psychology does do a good job of analyzing problems that people carry with them in life. As Christians we have too often failed to be sensitive to the need of emotional healing people have.

But the problem of psychology enters in when we go beyond this to using psychology instead of the Word of God's grace to solve the problems.

If they are meeting the demands of psychology, which often make good human sense, they assume they have the righteousness of God.

EXAMPLE: They often end up veering away from the Word especially when it comes to grace, and getting involved with psychological interpretation.

And grace cannot be mixed with works...

Paul has made it clear that God is not rejecting His people, yet in verses 7 to 10 we see the majority are turning away.

Romans 11:7

What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;

This is really a horrible statement. For it shows what happens to man, even one to whom so much has been revealed, when they reject.

Israel sought for righteousness: Romans 9:31-32
But Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Why? Because they did not

pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone.

The quest was right, the means were wrong

Who ended up obtaining righteousness? Those who were chosen, elected by God Who, in His foreknowledge, knew they would believe in His Son.

THOSE WHO WERE CHOSEN is one word in the GNT, the word for CHOICE or ELECTION. It is a fem noun indicating that they received this election from God. The impetus of this was their faith.

The word OBTAINED is a verb, active voice, because it is the faith of a man or woman or child that results in salvation.

PRINCIPLE: In any dispensation God provides an election to salvation to those who will believe in Christ.

So this first part of this verse declares what happens to a person, Jew or Gentile, who believes in Christ.

The second half of the verse and through verse 10 describes what happens when a person, Jew or Gentile, rejects salvation. But since Paul is addressing the Jews the interpretation is to them while the application is to the entire human race.

THE CONTRAST HERE IS: OBTAINED vs HARDENED

And the rest were hardened...

Aorist, passive, indicative, they received this hardening at a point in time.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Election to privilege is a grace provision of God. See verse 6 If it is by grace it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.
2. Israel did not obtain it because they sought righteousness by works.
3. We obtained it because we did the only thing man can do without merit and that is to place faith in Christ
4. The Righteousness was obtained because we were elected because we had faith in Christ.

5. Apart from faith when doctrine comes and is rejected, the test is failed and hardening results.
6. God is actively involved in our obtaining but not actively involved in the hardening.
7. The hardening of the heart comes because that which is true is rejected, and every time it is rejected the capacity to recognize the truth is diminishes.

When the Lord began teaching in parables it was because He did not want to give the people who were rejecting truth any more truth to reject.

Matthew 13:13-16 I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; And you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; For the heart of this people has become dull, And with their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes lest they should see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.

Romans 11:8

Just as it is written, God gave them a spirit of stupor, Eyes to see not and ears to hear not, Down to this very day.

Paul quotes Isaiah 29:10 and Deuteronomy 29:4

This spiritual dry rot sets in as more and more truth is rejected. They come to a point where in grace God's blinds the ones who reject to even seeing more truth because they will reject it.

Romans 11:9

And David says, Let their table become a snare and a trap, And a stumbling block and a retribution to them.

“Their table” is an idiom for the OT Law, that which was to point to the need for a Saviour became a snare, a trap, a stumbling block to them.

Now even today the Jews study the Law yet they do not know the Old Testament. Their time is spent developing details that lead not to enlightenment but to legalistic slavery.

They reason, they debate, they argue, they become more and more distracted...

One Rabbi wrote: "Paul claimed that obedience to the Torah could not guarantee salvation; rather, salvation was obtainable only through acceptance of and faith in the prophet Jesus Christ. To believe that a person could atone for his own sinful condition through any effort on his own, as for example, by observing the laws of the Torah, was to Paul a delusion.

"Paul eagerly announced that what man could not accomplish for himself, namely salvation, could be accomplished for him. Only God, however, was powerful enough to atone for man's sinfulness, and Paul held that the death of Christ Jesus was the act of divine atonement. We Jews have rejected this Gentile Christian view. Judaism, as shaped by our rabbis in Palestine, conceived of the body as a gift, and to this day regard the body as holy and wholesome.

"Any inclination by man to commit a wrongdoing, we hold, resides not in the body but in the heart or mind. Thus man, by himself, does indeed possess the power to atone for his own misdeed, and we Jews, have in our Torah, the guidance directing our hearts and minds to righteous living."

It is this type of thinking, that so accurately understands the issue and yet rejects it, that Paul is referring to here.

Their law becomes a stumbling block and the source of retribution.

The results, from Psalm 69:23...

Romans 11:10

Let their eyes be darkened to see not, And bend their backs forever.

Their eyes are darkened and the OT Law becomes a burden that bends their backs under its heavy load yet they will not by faith believe in Christ.

Romans 11:11-24 Another Question: What about the national promise to Israel? While in any age individual Jews can come to Christ for salvation,

does this mean that God has withdrawn the promises He made to His OT people?

Romans 11:11

I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.

They did stumble but it was not a once and for all, irrevocable fall. May it never be!

But by their rejection salvation comes in full force to the Gentiles in this new age, the CA.

THROUGH TO VERSE 24 Paul gives five arguments to prove that God will deal with Israel again and in the future they will again become a godly nation.

The first argument is found at the end of verse 11:

The salvation of the Gentiles was designed to reach Israel: Salvation has come to the Gentiles to make them (Israel) jealous.

This should, as we saw at the end of chapter 10, arouse to envy those to whom so much had been revealed.

In the book of Acts we find that everywhere Paul went he first tried to reach the Jews and it was only when they rejected Christ did he turn to the Gentiles.

The early Church filled with many young believers had an enthusiasm, a zeal that was envied by the Jews.

THIS TELLS ME that even now our faith should make us so alive, so vital in our Christianity, that the Jews would ask Why do they have it and we don't?.

The second argument is presented in Romans 11:12-15.

Paul states that Israel must once again be a godly nation because only then will worldwide blessing come upon the earth.

Romans 11:12-15

Now if their transgression be riches for the world and their failure be riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!

But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them. For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

Paul's argument is this: That if the riches of God's grace has come to the Gentiles through the failure of faith on the part of Israel, how much greater will the riches of grace be when, in a future time, Israel turns to God in faith?

Paul looks ahead to the Millennial Reign of Christ when perfect environment will be restored, when

Isaiah 11:9 They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.

Isaiah 65:25 The wolf and the lamb shall graze together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain, says the Lord.

These prophecies look ahead to the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham in Genesis 12:2 and 3 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing...And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Paul's third argument is in verse 16.

Romans 11:16

And if the first piece of dough be holy, the lump is also; and if the root be holy, the branches are too.

This argument looks at the offering of the firstfruits. The Jew would take a lump of dough from the first grain of the first harvest and take a piece of that dough and offer it to the Lord. Since the first handful was acceptable, the rest of the dough would be also.

Now Abraham was the firstfruits of the nation of Israel and at a time yet future, even for us, Abraham's descendants will also be acceptable.

The root looks at the source and the source of blessing for Israel was not man, but God. If one is attached to the root, there is blessings and this sets up the fourth argument.

Fourth argument, the branches that are grafted in verses 17-21

Romans 11:17

But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree,

God's direct dealing with Israel is seen here as the branch being broken off. The Gentiles of are the wild olive branches being grafted in.

Romans 11:18

do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.

This must not lead the Gentile, you and me as Christians, to arrogance.

C.S. Lewis said: "In a sense the converted Jew is the only normal human being in the world. Everyone one else is from one point of view a special case dealt with in an emergency situation. That is how we (Christians) got in, God sort of opened the back door and let us in. But the ones who really belong to God are the Jews. It is healthy for us to remember this."

Romans 11:19,20

You will say then, Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.

Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;

Here is the issue, not how special we are, how nice we are, only the simple fact of faith. The Gentiles embraced the Savior by faith while for much of Israel He was a stumbling block.

Romans 11:21

for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you.

A warning that should eliminate any thought of anti-Semitism.

The fifth and final argument is in verses 22-24:

Here the analogy is continued but the argument advances to see that God, having grafted in wild olive branches, will be much more ready to graft in the natural branches when they turn to Him in faith.

Romans 11:22

Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.

Cut off here is not to the individual but to any people, Greeks, Romans, Americans, who would not continue to receive His kindness.

The word kindness shares the same root as GRACE. How would we not continue in God's kindness? The same way Israel did not, by abandoning faith for works.

Romans 11:23

And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again.

Here the issue is made clear, UNBELIEF vs BELIEF or FAITH.

If they put their faith in God they will be grafted in, where they belong.

Romans 11:24

For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?

THE BOTTOM LINE OF ALL THIS is that God will be faithful to Israel even when Israel is not...

Romans 3:1-4 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?

May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man {be found} a liar...

AND THAT SAME PRINCIPLE IS APPLIED to us today:

I Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

I Thessalonians 5:24 Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

II Thessalonians 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

II Timothy 2:13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.

The last two paragraphs of Romans 11 serve as a summary and conclusion not only to the trilogy of chapters regarding Israel but also for all that Paul has taught from Romans, chapter one.

The issue thus far has been man's relationship to God. First unregenerate man, then the believer, then Israel, and even the Church's relations to Israel in light of her relationship to God.

So Romans 11:25-32 summarize the Church and Israel

While Romans 11:33-36 summarize the entire book thus far. And in doing that Paul directs full attention to our great and glorious God.

Romans 11:25

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

Paul has been directing comments to the Jews but now he addresses the Gentile Christians.

His desire is that they are not uninformed, this is AGNOEW or ignorant, regarding this mystery.

The word MYSTERY is MUSTEIRION and does not refer to that which is hard to figure out but rather that which was not revealed in the OT.

The word is used to refer to salvation, the churches relationship to Christ, the resurrection body, God's will, godliness, iniquity, certain prophetic figures, and the Church Age.

The last mystery is what is in view here and in Colossians 1:26-27 The mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations; but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

The word had great meaning in the Greek pagan cults because it referred to that which was known by the members but unknown by those on the outside.

So it is not a mystery in the sense that we cannot know it but only in that we must have God reveal it and the Holy Spirit instruct us these matters.

Paul wants the Gentile Believer to understand this mystery because to lack understand could result in arrogance, that is to be wise in your own estimation.

The arrogant estimation of self would put a wedge between Christians and Jews, it would and has caused Christians to persecute the Jews. All anti-Semitism comes from the arrogance of supposed self importance.

Paul explains the MYSTERY by telling us, Gentile Christians, that God has partially hardened Israel for a period of time.

TWO IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN THIS PHRASE:

1. The hardening is partial, for even in the Church Age Jews will put faith in Christ and be saved. As did Paul.
2. This is temporary, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, aorist subjunctive, simple time future.

HARDENING is the word PWRWSIS and differs from the word we had in Romans 9:18 which referred to Pharaoh as being hardened. There the word SKLEROTES was used which looks at a stubbornness to spiritual things.

Here the word PWRWSIS looks at a dullness of hearing, a blindness, an inability to perceive.

This is what God allowed to happen to Israel.

1. They were given much and much was expected.

2. Instead they rejected and chose to seek to establish their own righteousness.
3. God sent His own Son to them and for the most part they rejected Him, nailed Him to a Roman Cross.
4. Every decision of rejection resulted in an inability, a lack of capacity to perceive.
5. That pattern continues to this day as Jews who are rich in Scripture, dedicated in study, devote in practice, cannot see that Jesus is the Christ.

The CHURCH AGE is an insertion into the plan of God. It was known by God from eternity past, provision of election and predestination was made, but not revealed in the OT.

The Church Age has a set duration, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

The Church Age will be complete when the body of Christ is complete.

This means that God has a set number of those to be saved in this age.

This also means that as we witness for Christ we can be II Peter 3:13 Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God.

PRINCIPLE: Every person who is saved moves us one step closer to the completion of the body of Christ.

Romans 11:26, 27

And thus all Israel will be saved...

Paul draws a direct parallel between the fullness of the Gentiles and a time when Israel will be saved or delivered.

Here is a future, passive, ind which concludes a protisis apodisis in the Greek grammar.

This is a conditional statement. When the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled, then God will again turn to Israel and deal directly with them.

This looks ahead to the second advent which is described in Zechariah 14, a time when the Lord will deliver the saved of Israel and establish them in His Millennial Kingdom.

To further demonstrate this future event Paul quotes from Isaiah:

Just as it is written (Isaiah 59:20-21), The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.

(Isaiah 27:9) And this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.

MY COVENANT referees to the NEW COVENANT of Jeremiah 31:31-34

Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them, declares the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord, I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, declares the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.

This is a promise of God from which He has not turned, God still has a plan for His OT nation.

Romans 11:28

From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.

From our perspective, the Jews are the enemies of God, they crucified our Lord...but from God's standpoint they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob...the patriarchs to who the unconditional promise of God's grace was made.

Romans 11:29

The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

These gifts are grace gifts and the calling is God's election of Israel. These are not changed, they are not canceled out, they are not revoked.

PRINCIPLE: Because of the very character and essence of God, His promises to Israel still stand.

Romans 11:30,31

For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, so these also now have been disobedient, in order that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.

The Gentiles were for centuries disobedient to God. A few were saved in every generation but largely they rejected the one true God, the God of Israel.

But now they have received mercy, that is not what they deserved but what they did not deserve.

This temporary change came about because Israel rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. And they rejected Him because they chose to seek a righteousness of their own by works (Romans 9:30-32).

Now, in the Church Age, the situation is reversed. The Gentiles are putting faith in Christ, accepting God's gift of the Saviour and the Jews are rejecting.

PRINCIPLE: If the situation changed once, it can change twice, it can change again and God will show mercy to Israel once again as He deals directly with them in the Tribulation Period.

Romans 11:32

For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all.

Paul now broadens his argument out to the entire human race, he says look at all mankind...

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

But even in man's disobedient, fallen, sinful, depraved state, God has made a way through Christ to show mercy to all.

PRINCIPLE: If He can do this with all mankind, and He did and does now in the CA, can He not also do this with Israel when He will again deal directly with them in the future?

Romans 11:33-36 The Summary of the Life of Faith:

Paul concludes this section with the only statement that can really be made...that God is great, there is no comparison in Him to anything we can know. His riches go far beyond what we can ever imagine.

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!

As Paul has labored chapter after chapter telling of the greatness of God, and as he prepared to begin dealing with very practical matters, his emotions overflow to a tremendous outburst of in the God and Father He worships.

This outburst shows us that even with all the understanding we may have regarding God we cannot put Him into a box, there just is no box big enough!

His wisdom, His knowledge has not end, is rich beyond all riches and its depth is immeasurable.

His judgments are always perfectly just and yet for us, unsearchable. We see everything in a line, God sees it all from beginning to end.

We can know His judgments and His ways, but we cannot always explain them. We know the questions and we may not know the answers but we know the one who knows all the answers.

His ways cannot be traced out: God is always out in front, His paths are not known to us but He is known and follow after Him.

Romans 11:34

For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor?

The full paragraph begins as follows: Isaiah 40:12-14 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, And marked off the heavens by the span, And calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, And weighed the mountains in a balance, And the hills in a pair of scales? 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?

This is the same approach God used with Job. Bottom line, God is in control and we are not...rest by faith in that.

Now Paul goes to Job 35:7 and 41:11...

Romans 11:35,36

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.

This is a highly charged emotional section of Scripture but it is not unusual. Even in the much shorter letter to the Ephesians, as Paul is preparing to conclude the doctrinal portion and then begin the practical section, he overflows with appreciation in much the same way...

Ephesians 3:20-21 Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

WHAT DOES THIS SHOW US? That all the doctrine we may have, all the theology we may understand does not allow us to fully comprehend the God we serve and call our Father. He is so vast, so great, so high, that we may come to the point that all we can do is overflow with appreciation for His greatness.