

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Study through the Epistle to the Romans – Part 32

I. Exposition of Chapter Eleven (Continued).

A. Verses 28-29 - God's love and calling for Israel still endures.

1. **Verse 28** – “Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.” – The phrase “...enemies for your sake...” takes us back to **verses 11 and 12**. Even though it seemed that in Paul's generation the Jews were enemies against the Person and work of Jesus Christ, they were, and are still “**beloved**” - if for no other reason, then “...for the sake of the fathers.” (Because of the covenant with the patriarchs of the Old Testament).
2. **Verse 29** – “For the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.” – The word “**gifts**” here is the Greek word “**charisma**” which means; “**a gift of grace**”; “**an undeserved benefit.**”¹ This word is used in a variety of ways but here, in applying it to Israel, most likely refers to the idea that being chosen by God was by His grace and not by merit. **Chapter 9:4-5** contains a list of the grace-given privileges God bestowed upon Israel. The word “**calling**” basically refers to God's electing of Israel to a special destiny. The word “**irrevocable**” means; “**change the mind**” or “**regret**”. This principle, stated by Paul, comforts us far beyond its direct relevance to Israel. It means that God will not give up on us, and He leaves the path to restoration open.

B. Verses 30-32 - Paul cautions the Gentile Christians to remember where they came from and where God has promised to take the Jewish people.

1. **Verses 30 - 31** – “For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience.” - The Gentile Christians came from disobedience; yet God showed them mercy. If God could use the disobedience of Israel for the good of Gentiles, He could also use the mercy shown to Gentiles for the mercy of Israel. (**verse 11**).
2. **Verse 32** – “For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.” - The idea is that God has shut up both Jew and Gentile into custody as lawbreakers. God offers mercy to these prisoners, based on the person and work of Jesus. (**cf. 3:9, 19, 22-23; 11:32**).

C. Verses 33-36 – The Wisdom of God.

1. **Verse 33** – “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!” – It seems that Paul in considering God's great redemptive plan, he breaks into praise. Paul realizes that God's ways are past finding out, and God's wisdom and knowledge is beyond him.
2. **Verses 34 – 35** - The quotations from **Isaiah 40:13** and **Job 41:11** emphasize both God's wisdom and sovereign conduct; no one can make God their debtor. He doesn't owe us anything!

“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)! For who has known the mind of the Lord *and* who has understood His thoughts, or who has [ever] been His counselor? Or who has first given God anything that he might be paid back *or* that he could claim a recompense?”

Romans 11:33-35 – Amplified Bible

3. **Verse 36** - God is the source from which all things come, the means by which all things happen. He is the One Who finishes what He has initiated. (**cf. Colossians 1:16-17**). In view of all these things, He deserves all glory forever.

II. Exposition of Chapter Twelve. (We begin the final section: Righteousness Revealed – Romans 12:1-16:27). Paul now deals with the practical application of the doctrine of righteousness by faith. The first eleven chapters have primarily taught us how we obtain righteousness and these final chapters teach us how to live this out in righteous living.

A. Verse 1 – “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God...”

1. The word “**beseech**” actually means; “**to call to one's side**”. It has the idea of someone calling someone close in order to lovingly present his message to him. He seems relational here more than making a command.
2. “...**by the mercies of God...**” – Paul is saying “**I'm urging, begging, encouraging you because of all the aforementioned mercies of God to present your bodies...**”

¹Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, (AMG Publishers; Revised edition, 1993)

3. "...that you present your bodies a living sacrifice..." – The word "present", according to Picirilli is, "...one of the many words that were used to speak of offering sacrifices."² So, Paul is saying we're to offer our bodies to God! One big difference between this sacrifice and the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament – this is called a "living sacrifice". (cf. Chapter 6; Matthew 16:24-27; I Corinthians 6:15-20; II Corinthians 5:14-15; Galatians 2:20).
4. "...holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."
 - a. "holy" – The Old Testament sacrifices had to be holy before being presented to the Lord. The word means; "set apart, consecrated and pure."³ The idea is that we are to devote and set apart our bodies for His purpose.
 - b. "acceptable" – means, "well-pleasing." (cf. II Corinthians 5:9-11; Hebrews 12:28-29)
 - c. "...your reasonable service." – The word "reasonable" means; "rational" or "intelligent". The word "service" means; "the service and worship of God according to the requirements of the Levitical law; to perform sacred services."⁴

"I APPEAL to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship." – Romans 12:1 – Amplified Bible

B. Verse 2 – The Renewing of the Mind.

1. "And do not be conformed..." - The word "conformed" means; "to fashion alike"; "to conform to the same pattern"; "to fashion or shape one thing like another."
2. "...but be transformed..." - The word "transformed" means; "to change into another form"; "to transfigure". This is better understood as "continue to be transformed."
3. "...by the renewing of your mind..." - The word "renewing" means; "to make new or as if new again"; "a complete change for the better"; In this context it means "to adjust your mind to think like God."

"Mind' is the way we think, our attitudes, our philosophy. You see, the world continues to bombard us, in a thousand ways, with its philosophy. We must be 'brainwashed' every day, and so continually transformed, if we are to resist the world's way and walk, instead, by God's will. And the Word of God is the only source where we can find God's 'mind' by with to renew our own. The choice then is clear: the world or the Word, the mind of this age or the mind of God."⁵

4. "...that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." – The word "prove" means; "to examine; scrutinize; to put to the proof."
5. Cf. II Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:22-24.
6. Scriptural steps to Renewing Your Mind:
 - a. Know that it is God's Will for you to control your mind, will and emotions. If not then He would not have told us to transform our lives by renewing our minds. Our mind is our Servant NOT our Master. **Philippians 4:6-8**
 - b. Know that Jesus destroyed (untied, loosened) the works of the devil in your life. **I John 3:8.**
 - c. Know that you have a legal right to a "Sound Mind". **II Timothy 1:7.**
 - d. Know and have faith that the Word of God has the power to "wash" your mind, will and emotions from anything that contaminates them. **Ephesians 5:26.**
 - e. Reject and Resist wrong thoughts by speaking the Word and using the Name of Jesus. **II Corinthians 10:3-5.**

"A spiritual stronghold is a mind-set impregnated with hopelessness that causes us to accept as unchangeable, situations that we know are contrary to the will of God." Ed Silvano, "That None Should Perish".

- f. Meditate day and night in the Word of God. **Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3; I Timothy 4:15.** Meditate means; "to mutter to oneself"; "to speak aloud"; and "to revolve around in the mind". It also means; "to personalize"; "to memorize"; to visualize" and "to imagine".
- g. Be a Doer and NOT just a Hearer of the Word. **James 1:21-25.**

² Robert E. Picirilli, *Romans*. (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 1975), 240-241.

³Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, (AMG Publishers; Revised edition, 1993)

⁴Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*

⁵Picirilli, 242.