

ROMANS 9:1-11:36 | GOD'S WORK FULFILLED THROUGH ISRAEL

*Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, Pg. 38*

ROMANS 11:1-36 | GOD'S CURRENT PROGRAM: AN OVERLAP

*Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, Pg. 43-45*

ROMANS 11:25-32 | WHAT AND WHY

*Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 45*

Verses 25-27, see session 31

VERSE 28 - BLUE

I have chosen to use blue in the "Right Division Color Coding" system, applying the words directly to the Body of Christ today. This indicates that I understand Paul's reference to "the gospel" to be a reference to the Gospel of grace under which we live. I have done this chiefly because the Greek construction includes the "indeed, but" pattern that contrasts two ideas.

👉 In Greek, the combination of the particles  $\mu\epsilon\nu$  (men) and  $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$  (de) serves to contrast two ideas, as seen in verse 28 where  $\mu\epsilon\nu$  is used to introduce the first idea ("concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes") and  $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$  is used to introduce the second idea ("but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes"). The use of these particles together is often used in Greek to emphasize the contrast between the two ideas.

It would not be logically sound to contrast the Kingdom Gospel with election; therefore, it must be the Grace Gospel that is standing in contrast to election.

Concerning the Gospel of grace, Israel stands as an enemy (due to their blindness), and this is "for your sakes." That is, the fact that they are enemies has brought about "the reconciling of the world" (v. 15). How did they become enemies? By rejecting the Kingdom offer, as seen in Acts 13:45-46.

However, concerning "the election," there is no change in their status. The body of Christ is not the elect, nor does "the election" have anything to do with this new work of God.

It is worth noting that their status as "beloved" is "for the fathers' sakes." The reference is clearly to the Jewish Patriarchs, but since the recipients are Jews included in the age of grace, simply saying "the fathers" is sufficient. Strangely, the ESV says "for the sake of their forefathers." The insertion of the pronoun "their" implies that the letter is written to Gentiles. This insertion is needless, distracting, and entirely interpretive rather than a translation issue. It is the patriarchs to whom the promises have been given, and for their sakes will be delivered, as promised.

VERSE 29 - BLUE

While "**the gifts and calling of God**" in context is the election of Israel (compare Malachi 3:6), this verse is applicable for the church in both the specific way it is used (God's call to Israel is irrevocable) and in the more general sense (what God says, He will do). Today, in the body of Christ, we can rest assured that salvation really is "**by grace are ye saved through faith**" (Eph. 2:8), and that works are not involved in any measure.

VERSE 30 - BLUE

Most commentaries suggest that the "**ye**" who "**in times past have not believed God**" are Gentiles, but this creates problems with the plural pronouns, which argue for "Roman Jews" throughout the epistle.

👉 Note: Paul speaks to Gentiles in verses 13-24 using the singular pronoun since salvation in the age of grace is individual and not collective. However, He had been speaking to Roman Jews, using the plural pronoun, in verses 1-12 and then again beginning in verse 25.

In verse 30, Paul explains that the Roman Jews were unbelieving in "**times past.**" This could be a reference going back as far into the past as the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the invasion by the Assyrians that led these Jews to Rome. If Judea had come to a state of belief in the Pentecostal days of the Kingdom offer, then the promised Messianic Kingdom (i.e., the restitution of all things, Acts 3:21) would have been delivered, and God would have judged the Roman

Jews accordingly. However, since Judea is currently in unbelief, and since God has implemented an intervening age of grace instead of a time of judgment, which provides a merciful opportunity for the Roman Jews.

It is significant that Paul does not say that the Roman Jews obtained "grace," but rather "**mercy**." These terms are not interchangeable. "Grace" often refers to God's unmerited favor given freely to mankind for their salvation (Eph. 2:8-9), while "Mercy" often refers to God's compassion whereby He withholds deserved punishment (Eph. 2:4). Because Judea did not believe, the Roman Jews did not receive the punishment they deserved for their unbelief. The unbelief of the Jewish nation now presents a merciful opportunity for the Roman Jews.

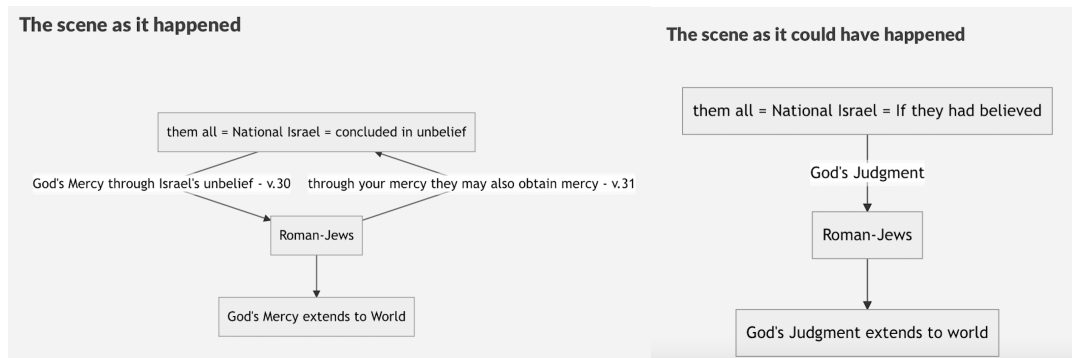
### VERSE 31 - BLUE

In a similar manner, just as mercy was shown to the Roman Jews due to the disobedience of those in Judea, the presently disobedient Jews (those in Judea) also now have an opportunity to obtain mercy because of the mercy shown to the Roman Jews. This is possible due to the nature of this mercy—it's a mercy of reprieve, a delay in the day of the Lord. Since the Lord's return in judgment is postponed, both groups—Judea and the diaspora Jews in Rome—find themselves within the boundaries of mercy.

### VERSE 32 - BLUE

The phrase "**them all**" refers to Judean Jews (national Israel). By "**concluding them all**" in disobedience, mercy is given to the diaspora (which would have been judged guilty if Israel had been obedient) and to national Israel (which now is blessed by a delay in judgment, just like the Roman Jews do).

The two charts below show first the scene as Paul describes it and second the scene as it would have been if National Israel had believed.



👉 Right Dividers, in their study and interpretation of the Bible, pay particular attention to the distinct time periods or dispensations that God has set in His dealings with humanity. One of the crucial transitions they focus on is the shift from the age of law to the age of grace, which they understand occurred due to Israel's unbelief.

Right Dividers believe that when the Jews in Judea rejected their promised Messiah, a significant shift happened in God's plan. Instead of bringing forth the immediate judgment and establishment of the Messianic Kingdom, God postponed this event. This postponement initiated what is known as the "age of grace" or the "dispensation of grace."

In this age, God's mercy is freely offered to all people, Jews and Gentiles alike. This is distinct from the previous age where God's covenant blessings were primarily with the nation of Israel. Now, the mercy of God extends to everyone, including the Roman Jews, the disobedient Jews in Judea, and indeed the entire world.

Firstly, mercy was shown to the Roman Jews who had been unbelieving in the past. Then, the currently disobedient Jews in Judea were given an opportunity to obtain this mercy due to the mercy shown to the Roman Jews. And finally, this mercy was extended to the entire world. Right Dividers see this as evidence of God's remarkable ability to bring good out of difficult situations, even unbelief.

Thus, the unbelief of Israel, which could have led to judgment, instead led to a postponement of that judgment and the introduction of a new era - the age of grace. This transition was not just a delay but an extension of God's mercy to all mankind.

Therefore, Right Dividers understand that the age of grace came about through Israel's unbelief, marking a significant shift in God's plan and demonstrating His expansive mercy

### VERSE 33 - BLUE

Paul expresses spontaneous praise for the wonderful plan that God has revealed. The arrangement is so spectacular that Paul can only sing God's praises in amazement.

He speaks of the "**riches**" of God's "**wisdom and knowledge**," using the Greek word πλοῦτος [plootos], which gave rise to the term "plutocracy" (a government by the wealthy). The word πλοῦτος is derived from the Greek root πίμπλημι [pletho], which also gave us the word "plethora" (an excess or abundance).

He asserts that God's judgments and ways are "**unsearchable**" and "**past finding out**." Therefore, our knowledge is limited to what God has revealed. This revelation can be seen generally in nature (Rom. 1:20) and specifically in Scripture. Contemplation and study of nature and Scripture can help us to know God, while meditation and other forms of mysticism are useless since His ways are "unsearchable" and "past finding out."

👉 Christians have historically recognized two sciences as the most important for discovering the characteristics of God and His ways: Scriptural science and natural science.

Natural science, in the classical understanding, encompasses a broad range of disciplines, including but not limited to geometry, astronomy, music theory, and the study of the physical universe and the laws that govern its behavior.

Scriptural science, on the other hand, is the study of God's Word, the Bible. It is the study of God's revelation of Himself and His ways to humanity. By studying the Bible, we can gain insight into the character and nature of God, as well as His plan for humanity.

Both natural science and Scriptural science are important for Christians to study. By understanding the natural world, we can gain a deeper appreciation for God's power and creativity. By understanding the Bible, we can gain a deeper appreciation for God's love and grace. Together, these sciences can help us to know God more fully and to live out our faith in a way that honors Him.

### VERSES 34-35 - BLUE

Paul utilizes rhetorical questions in verses 33-34 to emphasize the overwhelming vastness of God's wisdom and the limitations of human understanding. If God's mind is as incomprehensibly profound as Paul suggests, then no one can know it unless God chooses to reveal it to them. This is the basis for Paul's question, "**Who hath known the mind of the Lord?**" Paul follows this by posing, "**Or who hath been his counsellor?**" This question underscores the point that no human being can provide guidance or wisdom to God, whose judgments and plans are far beyond our reach.

Finally, Paul asks, "**Who hath first given to him...**," implying that God is not indebted to anyone. This rhetorical question affirms the total independence and self-sufficiency of God, in the sense that He neither owes anything to anyone nor needs anything from anyone. This line of reasoning serves to amplify the extent of God's sovereignty and reinforce the awe and reverence with which Paul regards Him. In this way, these questions help to further accentuate the overarching theme of God's unparalleled wisdom and unfathomable judgments.

### VERSE 36 - BLUE

In this verse, Paul utilizes a trio of prepositions to illuminate the various dimensions of God's relationship with the universe: "**of**," "**through**," and "**to**." Each preposition offers a unique perspective on God's interaction with the world. "Of" denotes God as the prime source of all existence, emphasizing that everything in the cosmos originates from His divine power. "Through" illustrates God as the sustainer, responsible for the continual existence and maintenance of the universe. Lastly, "to" signifies God as the ultimate purpose of all things, hinting that every aspect of creation is destined to bring glory to Him. In essence, these prepositions collectively present God as the origin, preserver, and final aim of all creation.