
From Dock to Doxology

Romans 11:1-36

Introduction:

³³ Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his
ways!

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

³⁵ “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?”

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

What a glorious doxology!

Whatever we do with chapter 11, it has to fit with the wonderful reality that this section ends with doxology. *Doxa* is the Greek word for glory and to sing a doxology means to proclaim praise for God’s glory.

Chapter 11 ends the section begun in ch.9 with glorious praise for God’s ways (v.33).

God’s plan of redemption was so deep that no surface treatment could begin to grasp it. For four thousand years there was profound attention placed upon a single nation, a single people. The entire OT Scriptures describe the attention God placed on a single nation. The narratives bring us from creation to humanity and funnel all humanity down to a single man named, Abraham, who becomes the father of nations. But only one of those nations is singled out by God and granted his *presence and participation*.

I want you to see that in ch. 11 we move from dock to doxology.

Since the beginning of ch. 9, God has been called in the dock and placed on trial. The charge is that God owes salvation to the Jews in order for him to be true to his covenant promises and eternal purposes. But, given the widespread rejection and murder of Jesus, the vehement denial of Paul’s gospel, it is clear that the word of the Lord has failed.

The question on the dock since 9:6 deals with whether or not the word of God has failed. Has he rejected Israel. Paul’s argumentation is powerful and in three parts:

1. The word of God has not failed. There is a problem with the prosecuting attorney’s presuppositions.
 - A. The promise of salvation does not reside in the presence of Abraham’s blood in one’s veins. Enter exhibit A: Ishmael v. Isaac (cf. 9:7-8). “It is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God.” And it is not simply about Abraham’s blood – both Isaac and Ishmael had Abraham’s blood but different mothers.
 - B. So to remove all doubt, it’s not all about wombs either. Enter exhibit B: Jacob v. Esau (cf. 10-13). Here the boys share the same womb and one is chosen and the other rejected before they are even born. It has nothing to do with Abraham’s blood and it has nothing to do with personal effort. It

has everything to do with a sovereign God who does whatever he desires. 9:11 states that there was a purpose to God's choosing, to God's election and the rest of ch. 9 demonstrates that the purpose of that election was to highlight God's mercy (cf. 9:14-23).

- C. Salvation has come only to those whom God has chosen apart from any merits of either works righteousness or blood lines. Enter exhibit C: "My People" v. "Not my people" (9:24-29). Just to be clear and to remove all doubt, God has now chosen to make a group his people who once not his people. The Gospel of God's righteousness is now reaching even the pagan Gentile nations. God never promised spiritual salvation to every Jew. He simply said that there would always be a remnant of Jews who believe (cf. 9:27). And more than that, salvation would even go as far as the pagans. This was to highlight his mercy. To his people that rejected him, he would still be merciful to a chosen remnant. To a people that were never his people, he would extend mercy to many.
2. The second part of Paul's argument showcases another purpose in God's electing plan. Not only does he set out to highlight his mercy, but now he sets out to showcase faith. The way of salvation was always the way of faith. But salvation has missed the Jews at large because they stumbled over the stumbling stone. They missed that it was all about faith in Christ and instead pursued a righteousness of their own as if it were based on works of the Mosaic Law. It was never about performance, it was always about believing. Yet, even in this blatant rejection and unbelief on the part of the Jews, God has still kept an outstretched hand of invitation to all the Jews. I mean all of the Jews.

But wait a minute. That sounds incongruous. He never chose to save all Jews, only a remnant. And most of the Jews have missed the gospel due to the pursuit of establishing their own righteousness based on law-keeping. And yet, God still holds out hope for all Jews? He still holds his hands outstretched to all Jews? You mean he has not rejected his people? His patience has not run out? That is precisely the relation between 10:21 and 11:1

3. The third argument is made by Paul entering himself as exhibit D (11:2-6). Paul knows that God has not utterly rejected Jews simply because Paul has received the saving work of God's faithful word. He is a part of that believing and promised remnant.

So now what? That is what Paul asks in 11:7 ("What then?"). So now what?

Doxology

Go with me to the doxology at the end for one more minute (11:33-36, esp. 33).

I want you to see three things from ch. 11:

1. God's plan for redemption was utterly surprising! (v. 33)

The redemptive plan of God has been to write a drama about the reversal of fortunes – a people who thought they were in are now out and a people who were never considered to

be in are now in. A people who never entered the race are winning the race and a people who started the race are running in the wrong direction.

Paul knows that while God is still patient toward Jews and still rescuing his remnant from among the whole, there is a sense in which Israel is an enemy of the Gospel (v. 28; vv.7-10)

Paul quotes Psalm 69:22-23 in 11:9-10 – in its context this is a war psalm written by David about Israel’s enemies. Now Paul has inserted Israel into this context. There has been a reversal of fortunes.

But, notice 9:11 – Did Israel stumble over Jesus so that they might be utterly fallen? Paul’s answer is, “By no means!” Rather, had the Jews not stumbled over Jesus, there would be no crucifixion – no cross – and thus, no salvation for the world. And Jesus had to be crushed under the Jewish system so that the Jewish system could fall and be shown as a means to a greater end. Salvation is not through the Jewish system (OC) but through Jesus and the New Covenant.

But know this, that while it is gracious and glorious to see Gentile come to Christ it is glorious and proper, if not natural, to see a Jew finally embrace their Messiah (cf. 11:12, 24)

You Gentiles need to see how utterly surprising this Gospel is. No one could have seen this ending!

But while there is a reversal of fortunes, your salvation is not complete yet!

2. God’s plan for redemption was totally sovereign (v. 34-35)

This plan is all God! Don’t you think for one minute that you have God on the hook for anything! This is precisely the sin of the Jewish people. They felt as though they were safe and secure and “in.” Then they turned that safety and security into a means for selfish lusts.

Paul spends a great deal of time warning us to not do what they did (11:17-24).

God used the Jews to reach the world – Don’t think for one minute there was something about you. There was nothing! It is to showcase grace and mercy that he saves anyone!

The warning here is for a persevering faith!

Cf. John 15:1-17

3. God’s plan for redemption is completely splendid (v.36)

There is only one way for the gospel to be glorious – it must come by grace alone, through faith alone, apart from works! God means to showcase the gospel – Christ (cf. 11:25-32).

This means that God is not on the hook for anything. Neither Jews nor Gentiles can claim to have God on the hook. He does not owe the Jews anything more than the true meaning of his promises (cf. 11:29), and he never promised a thing to the Gentiles.

There has been a leveling of the nations. All are sinners who stand in need of mercy (cf. 11:30-32)

Application:

The Jews have put God in the dock. They think they have him on the hook – You owe us!

The warning to the Gentiles is – don't you now put God in the dock. Your reversal of fortunes has not come yet. Do not move now to works righteousness or to presuming that God owes you something. Do not be proud and do not presume.

1. In what ways do you put God in the dock? (usually taking a promise out of its context) All of human history and every human life are about Christ. How do you make it about you?
2. How will you showcase the glory of the gospel? The way keep God from being called to the dock is to move to doxology. (sing the glory of the gospel by highlighting signs of grace in others)