

## INTRODUCTION

Please open your Bibles to Romans 11. Today I’m going to talk about “Our God is an Awesome God.” When I was in high school, I had a friend named Dottie Pippin and even in the tenth grade, she was a knockout. She was my friend, but of course, I never thought about dating her, because she was going steady with a senior, Tim. In fact, she wore his senior ring on her hand. Do you remember when girls used to wrap tape on their boyfriend’s ring to make the big ring stay on her small finger? One year, a couple of weeks before homecoming, she batted her big, brown eyes at me and said, “David, why don’t you ask me to go to the homecoming dance with you?” I said, “I thought you were going with Tim, Dottie.” She said, “Not anymore. He asked some other girl. We broke up.” So I said, “Yeah, man!” So I took Dottie Pippin to the homecoming dance.

I noticed that night at the dance she seemed to be distracted and preoccupied. She kept looking across the dance floor at Tim, sort of steering me toward him. To make a long story short, during the intermission, she and Tim got together and talked. She came over to me and said, “David, I hope you don’t mind, but Tim’s going to take me home, okay?” I didn’t even get to take Tim’s date home. She went home with her sister.

I’ve got to admit, I’ve always been a little naive, but I was really naive then. You know what Dottie was doing? It took me this long to figure it out. She wanted me to take her to that dance just to make Tim jealous. And it worked. What in the world has that got to do with the Bible? Look at Romans 11:11. It will all make sense to you. This is exactly what the Bible says.

### I. GOD’S AMAZING PLAN—THEOLOGY (25-32)

Salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious, jealous. This message is going to go in two different directions. The first part is God’s amazing plan; how He has dealt with, how He is dealing with, and how He will deal with the nation of Israel. I call this theology.

Look at Romans 11:25-32. Paul writes, “I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: [and here’s the truth] Israel has experienced a hardening in part” You remember I told you the word hardening is the word *porosis*, which means like a covering over the eyes that causes blindness. “Until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. [Then here’s the prediction.] And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written.” This is a quotation from Isaiah: “The deliverer [Jesus] will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”

Then Paul says, “As far as the gospel is concerned, they [when he uses they, he’s talking about the Jews; when he uses you, he’s talking about Gentiles] they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they [the Jews] are loved on account of the patriarchs.” Here’s an amazing overarching principle of the word of God: “for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable.” His promises, his call, his gifts to the nation of Israel, they’ve not been canceled.

Verse 30, “Just as you, Gentiles, who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they, too, have now become disobedient in order that

they, too, may now receive mercy as a result of God’s mercy to you. For God has bound all men [Jews and Gentiles, men and women, boys and girls] over to disobedience [which means we’re all lost without Christ] so that he may have mercy on them all.”

In verse 25, Paul says, “There is a mystery, but I want you to understand this mystery.” The word “mystery” in the New Testament is not some whodunit you can’t figure out; it is a deep truth of God that is revealed, and God wants you to understand.

Let’s consider three truths about this blindness or hardening over the eyes of Israel.

### **1. Israel’s blindness toward Jesus is partial**

Verse 25 says their hardening is in part. That means only a portion of the nation of Israel is blind to Jesus. There is a believing remnant of Jews and there has always been a believing remnant of Jews who have put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ, but most of Israel is blinded to this.

When we get on the Internet, we can go from website to website. We have a word for that; we call it links. Sometimes one web site will link you to another web site, and that’s a good way to get information. The Bible is better than the Internet. I call it the Salvation Net because there are links in the Bible. When we read one truth in the Bible, we ought to be looking to link it with a parallel or corresponding truth.

I want to show you that Paul is saying in Romans 11:25 is linked to what Jesus said about Jerusalem. Look at Luke 19:41-42. It is what we call Palm Sunday, and Jesus is approaching the city of Jerusalem. It was a week before He was crucified, this is what Luke wrote, “As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it, and said, ‘If you, (Jews, Israel, Jerusalem) even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace, (that is, recognizing me as the Messiah) but now it is hidden from your eyes.’”

In Romans 11:25, the Apostle Paul is talking about a blindness, a *porosis*, a hardening that’s over the eyes of the Jews. That’s exactly what Jesus was talking about in Luke 19. This blindness is only partial.

### **2. This blindness is limited or temporary**

Notice the word “until.” In other words, the nation of Israel is largely blinded to the truth about Jesus until something happens. What is the “until”? Look at 11:25. “...until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.” Come into what? Come into the church. Come into the kingdom of God. This is an amazing truth that God has already predetermined exactly who’s going to be saved. When the last Gentile comes into the church, it’s going to trigger an event. That’s when Jesus is going to come and rapture the church, and at that time, something’s going to happen in the nation of Israel. This “until” comes into effect. Let’s link it; double click, link it to what Jesus said.

Jesus said in Luke 21:24, “Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” This is exactly the same thing Paul said. And at that time, Jesus said this

is what's going to happen: They will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. That's the Second Coming. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing nigh, coming near. That's what Jesus said. When these things are happening, you know that all of this is taking place. In the Old Testament book of Isaiah, 750 years before Jesus was born, Isaiah, in chapter 6, sees a vision of the Lord high and lifted up. And the Bible says his glory filled the place. You heard Seraphim expressing praise to God saying the same thing in the song we just sang, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty."

God said to Isaiah, "I need a messenger. Whom can I send and who will go for me?" I picture Isaiah as a second grade student who knows the right answer to a tough question, raising his hand before the teacher, "Here am I, Lord, send me." We've all heard that story up to that point. Do you remember what happens right after that? God says to Isaiah, "Okay, Isaiah, I'm going to send you, but I want to prepare you for failure, because I assure you, you're going to go to these people, the Israelites, but hearing, they're not going to hear, seeing, they're not going to see. Their hearts are callused and they're not going to receive the message you preach." And then Isaiah asks a very important question. He says, "How long, Lord? How long will they be blinded to the truth?"

The answer to that question is not given in Isaiah. The answer is not given in Jeremiah or Ezekiel or any of the minor prophets. The answer is not to be found in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John or in Acts. The answer to that question, how long, is not found in Romans 1:1 through Romans 11:24. The answer appears in Romans 11:25. How long will they be blinded? "Until the full number of the Gentiles has come in." I don't know about you, it just kind of makes chill bumps go up my spine when I think about how much control God has over this whole situation.

### **3. Israel's blindness toward Jesus is going to be removed**

In the future, and the scales will fall off their eyes just like they fell off the eyes of the Apostle Paul when he was saved. In fact, it says in verse 26 that all Israel will be saved. That's what Jesus is talking about again. In Matthew 23:37-39, he says "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who killed the prophets and stoned those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house (meaning the temple) is left to you desolate (empty). For I tell you, (here's the prediction) you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" He spoke this on what we call Palm Sunday, but they saw Him on Monday and Tuesday. Yet He said, "You're not going to see me." Do you know what he's talking about here? He is saying, "You will not see and recognize me for who I am until this future event, when you say 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" So what's going to happen? When the last Gentile is saved, brought into the church, Jesus will come to rapture the church out of here, and it will usher in a time of tribulation when the scales are going to fall off the eyes of the nation of Israel. The Bible says in the nation of Israel, there are going to be 144,000 Jewish evangelists preaching about Jesus. God's ways seem to be strange sometimes, but that's what the Bible says is going to happen.

Does a Jewish person without Jesus Christ have a special dispensation, a special allowance, a special excuse? No. Verse 32 is true for Jews and Gentiles. “God has bound all people over to disobedience so that he can show mercy to all.”

### **BOTTOM-LINE TRUTH: All of us are sinners—we need God’s mercy**

Whether you are a man, woman, boy, girl, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, smart or dumb, you need God’s mercy. We all do. That’s God’s amazing plan.

## **II. GOD’S AWESOME PERSONALITY - DOXOLOGY (33-36)**

Beginning in verse 33, Paul breaks out in praise. He is so amazed at this plan of God. I call these verses the doxology. Let’s begin reading verse 33, “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God that God should repay him? (I love verse 36. I’ve never been so excited about prepositions in all my life.) For from him, and through him, and through him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.” Paul was so excited he just burst forth in praise.

What is so great about that? When you understand what God is doing and how he’s doing it, you just have to say, “God, I don’t understand it, but I praise you because you are a great, great God.” I want us to notice some great things about God. I believe that You will burst forth with praise when you realize that:

### **1. God is bigger and smarter than I can comprehend**

He’s greater, bigger, smarter, and wiser than you or I can ever comprehend. I call this

#### **His greatness**

Look at verse 33 for just a moment. “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God.” Do you know the difference between knowledge and wisdom? Knowledge is the accumulation of information. Wisdom is the ability to know what to do with that information. We have a lot of knowledge in this world today. In fact, the Bible predicts in the last days, there is going to be an increase in knowledge. For instance, did you know medical technology and medical knowledge today has extended the life span of every one of us? That’s knowledge, but few people have the wisdom to know what to do with those extra years of life.

God possesses both knowledge and wisdom, and we may have a little knowledge, but we may not have much wisdom. A. W. Tozer, who was sort of a 20th century prophet, wrote this about God’s intelligence. He says, “God knows instantly and effortlessly all matter and all matters, all mind and every mind. He knows all spirit and every spirit. He knows all being and every being. God knows all laws and every law. He knows all causes, all thoughts, all mysteries, all enigmas, all feelings, all desires. God knows every unuttered secret of your heart, every personality, all things visible, invisible, motion, time, space, depth, good, evil, heaven and hell.”

That just about covers it. God knows it all. Our problem is, we strut around and think we are somebody smart. When we start thinking about the greatness of the brilliance of God, in comparison we are all bumbling idiots. Sometimes we get caught up in our intellectual pride. My older daughter, Jenni, is a student at Oklahoma University where she is a pre-med major. She's a pretty smart girl. She was a National Merit Scholar, Dean's List, all this stuff. She works at a café, where she serves coffee at a coffee bar. One afternoon, after a long day, she was at work wearing her cap and t-shirt. The head of the chemistry department walked in. She recognized him, but of course, he doesn't know her from Eve. He walked up and asked, "How long has the coffee been on that burner?" She answers, "Oh, about 20 or 30 minutes." He says, "You're going to have to make me a new pot of coffee, because after 20 minutes, coffee starts tasting like Benzene." Then he raised his nose and looked down at her and said, "But I guess you don't have the foggiest idea what Benzene is, do you?"

Jenni, who's had organic chemistry looked at him and said, "Actually, sir, Benzene is a six-member carbon ring, with aromatic properties, with alternating double bonds stabilized by resonance, toxic in its purest composition." He looked at her and said, "I guess you want a tip, don't you?" She said, "You'd better believe it." About the time we think we're really smart, God has a way of cutting us down to size. The Bible says His wisdom and knowledge are beyond our comprehension. I think you'll burst forth in praise when you consider that

## **2. God is better and He's richer than we can understand**

His ways are better and his wealth is greater. I call that

### **His glory**

Look at the second part of verse 33, "How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!" That means that God is so great that we cannot track Him or pin Him down. We can't say, "God, I have you completely figured out." The moment that we utter a statement like that, we know that we don't have Him figured out, because we cannot figure God out. If we could figure God out, we would be God.

There is a heresy going around. It used to be called the New Age Movement, but we don't often hear it called that anymore. The New Age Movement is just an Eastern mystery religion in a three-piece suit. The New Age teaches that God is in everything. God is in this carpet, God is in me, God is in you, God is everything, and God is in everything. In philosophy that is called Pantheism and we don't believe that. We believe in a concept that is called the transcendence of God, which means God created this universe, but He is separate from the universe, and there is a transcendence to God that we can never, ever approach. There is a part about God's personality that we'll never completely comprehend.

Verse 35 says, "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" Sometimes we think that when we give our money to God, we are helping Him out. "Here, you probably need this, God, to continue your work." No, friend. The reason we give to God is to receive a blessing. He doesn't need anything, because he's better and he's richer than all of us.

Let’s look at those three prepositions again. “For from Him (that means He’s the source of life; He *created* it all) and through Him (that means He’s the course of life) and to Him (that means He’s the source of life and the course of life and the force of life) are all things.

I would like to illustrate this, using a basketball to represent the sun. Of course, the sun is actually 865,000 miles in diameter and is 93 million miles away, but we’re going to reduce it relatively speaking to the size of this basketball. I just want you to get a glimpse of the greatness of God. The basketball is the sun. We’re going to take 83 paces out past the Family Life Center, and we’re going to take a tiny, little mustard seed and put it down on the ground. That’s the planet Mercury. We’re going to take 60 more steps out into the Green Acres Shopping Center parking lot, we’re going to put down a BB. That’s Venus. We’re going to take 78 more steps to the other side of the Green Acres Shopping Center parking lot and then we’re going to put down a green pea. That’s planet Earth. Then we’re going to walk 84 more steps down the Troup Highway, and we’re going to put down a smaller BB. That’s Mars.

We haven’t even started yet. We must walk 788 more paces to the other side of the Loop, where we’re going to put down a tangerine to represent Jupiter. Then we’re going to walk 904 more steps out down Troup Highway, we’re going to put down a golf ball: that’s Saturn. We’re not anywhere yet. We’re going to walk 2,032 more paces, and we’re going to put down a marble, and that’s Uranus. Then we’re going to walk 2,332 more paces, put down a cherry, that’s Neptune. We’re not going to think about Pluto, because some people think it’s not a planet anyway, just one of the weird moons of Neptune. It’s way on out. That’s two-dimensional. Let’s go three-dimensional. Let’s consider that the distance from that basketball, that star, that sun, to the next nearest sun, star, Alpha Center, is 6,720 miles. There are 400 million of those basketballs in our little galaxy. How many galaxies? We don’t know. There are galaxies out there we never have discovered. The Bible says in Isaiah 40:12, that God has measured the universe with a span of his hand. Boom.

Does that mean that we are just a little speck of dust on that green pea out in the parking lot? We don’t even register as a speck of dust. Our God is a great God; He’s a mighty God; He’s an awesome God; He created it all. Does that make you feel small? When we consider the greatness of God, it does make us feel small and insignificant. It is amazing to know that God picked me out to love and send His Son for me, and He knows how many hairs are on my head. Everything is from Him.

Everything is through Him. That means that by Him all things consist. The Bible says in Colossians 1:17, “He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” When you were in school, you learned about atoms and molecules and you know that even atoms themselves are made of subatomic particles, electrons are spinning around the nucleus. Have you ever wondered why those electrons don’t just zing? What keeps it all together? What keeps molecules together? What keeps the molecules in the wood of this pulpit from disintegrating? What is it that keeps the molecules in my physical flesh together? The answer to that is Jesus. By Jesus, all things hold together. The very fact that this universe is intact is because of the power of Jesus.

**All things are from Him. He created it all. All things are through Him. By Him, all things consist.**

Verse 36 continues with, "...and to him are all things." That means that

### **One day all things will culminate in Him**

Notice those three prepositions: "From, through, to." Everything is from Him; He originates everything. Everything is through Him; He perpetuates everything. Everything is to Him; He's the one who decides when everything terminates. Originates, perpetuates, terminates. When Paul starts thinking about the greatness of God, he just sort of goes into overload and he says, "Wow, the greatness of the glory of God. Amen."

This is more than nice; it's life changing. One of the most unfortunate chapter divisions in all the Bible is between chapter 11 and chapter 12. Glance down at 12:1. It says, "Therefore, (because God is such a great God, because he's such a merciful God) I urge you brothers, in the view of God's mercy to offer your bodies as living sacrifices unto God."

Why didn't God say, "Offer your soul or spirit?" Here's why. You can't separate your body and your soul and your spirit. God knows if you give your body to Him, the soul and the spirit is going to be given to Him. Sometimes people say to me, "Pastor, I'm not going to be in church this Sunday, but I'll be there in spirit." It's kind of spooky to me to stand up here and preach to a bunch of spirits in these pews. The truth is, you cannot do that. I know they mean they're going to be there in thought, but you can't separate your spirit from your body. That's what happens at physical death; the spirit departs from the body. You can't do it until then.

Paul is saying, "Give everything you have, everything you are to God." Can we honestly say that today our bodies are available to God as living sacrifices? Do we ever say things with our mouths that aren't pleasing to God? Are we looking at things that aren't holy? Are our feet taking us places that we should not go? Are our hands doing things that we should not be doing? When we offer our bodies to God, we offer everything we have to Him. That's what we ought to do when we consider how great God is.

### **Here's the bottom-line truth: Give Him your life now**

Don't wait. One day, the Bible says, every knee is going to bow and every tongue is going to confess that Jesus is Lord. The absolute worst reprobate sinner one day is going to stand before God and kneel before God, and say, "I confess, Jesus is Lord of the universe." God will say, "It's too late." My friend, you must confess Him now as Lord. He's a great God. He's a glorious God. He is a loving and a forgiving God.

I want you to bow your head with me right now for just a moment. Is there anything you need to offer to God today? Maybe there are parts of your body that have not been surrendered to His use. It might be your brain, your hands or your feet. Would you today say, "Lord, I'm offering all that I am to all that you are. I make myself available to you." Some of you are in terrible situations right now in your families and in your job, in your financial condition, in your health. You say, "Oh, what am I going to do?" I'll tell you what to do. Offer yourself completely to God. "Lord, I'm yours, everything I am and everything I'm not. Here I am." That's the first step.

Some of you need to come this morning and say, Pastor, I’m not a Christian; I need Jesus in my life. Pastor, I’m a believer, but I’ve not been baptized. Or I’m a Christian, but I’m not a member of this church. God is leading me here. That’s a step of obedience God wants you to take.

## OUTLINE

### I. GOD'S AMAZING PLAN: THEOLOGY (25-32)

Israel's "blindness" toward Jesus is:

#### 1. Limited (in part)

As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes." *Luke 19:41-42*

#### 2. Temporary (until)

"Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled...At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." *Luke 21:27-28*

#### 3. Going to be removed (will be saved)

Jesus said: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'" *Matthew 23:37-39*

Bottom line truth: All of us are sinners—We need God's mercy!

### II. GOD'S AWESOME PERSONALITY: DOXOLOGY (33-36)

You will burst forth with praise when you realize that GOD IS:

#### 1. Bigger and smarter than I can comprehend! (His greatness)

#### 2. Better and richer than I can understand! (His glory)

a. From Him—He created it all!

b. Through Him—By Him all things consist!

He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. *Colossians 1:17*

c. To Him—All things culminate in Him!

Bottom line truth: Give Him your life now!



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To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes