

**Sermon Title: The Hymn That Praises God For His Purposes And Plan In Salvation History**

**Sermon Text: Romans 11:33-36**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to the incomprehensibility of God as a motivation for praise.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 3 characteristics related to the incomprehensibility of God that deserves praise.**

- I. The 1<sup>st</sup> expression of praise reflects on 5 **exclamations** of God's wise plan. V.33
- II. The 2<sup>nd</sup> expression of praise reflects on 3 rhetorical questions that emphasize **human inability** to understand God's ways. V.34-35
- III. The 3<sup>rd</sup> expression of praise reflects on the **ultimacy** of God's wise plan. V.36

**Introduction:** One of the great challenges of preaching and teaching people about God and God's Word is the dual reality of an infinite God and a finite man. We live in a day when people know not the God of the Bible, let alone understand His ways, plans, and purposes. (**1 Corinthians 2:6-16**)

Confusion about what God has revealed, should not be characteristic of the church or believers. In this particular text before us today Paul is referring to all that has been said in Romans (1-11), especially (9-11). In these verses Paul concludes his line of reasoning that Israel's current unbelief is no argument against the truth of the Gospel (**Romans 1:16-17**). He is moved to praises of wonder over several of God's attributes, "Who has seen or understood what God was working out?". (**Ephesians 3:14-21**)

- I. The 1<sup>st</sup> expression of praise reflects on 5 **exclamations** of God's wise plan. V.33
  - A. The depth of the **riches** of God's wise plan. V.33a
  - B. The depth of the **wisdom** of God's wise plan. V.33b  
This refers to knowing what to do, how to do it, for each situation that may arise.  
**Psalm 104:24** O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions—  
**Daniel 2:20** Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His.  
**Ephesians 3:10** to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*,  
**Revelation 7:12** saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, *Be* to our God forever and ever. Amen."
  - C. The depth of the knowledge of God's wise plan. V.33c  
This refers to God's omniscience.  
**1 Samuel 2:3** "Talk no more so very proudly; Let no arrogance come from your mouth, For the LORD *is* the God of knowledge; And by Him actions are weighed.  
**1 Kings 8:39** "then hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know (for You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men),  
**Psalm 44:21** Would not God search this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart.
  - D. The depth of the **unsearchable judgment** of God's wise plan. V.33d  
This refers to God's purposes or decrees, which are beyond human understanding.  
**Psalm 36:6** Your righteousness *is* like the great mountains; Your judgments *are* a great deep; O LORD, You preserve man and beast.
  - E. The depth of **ways** of God's wise plan. V.33e  
This refers to the methods God chooses to accomplish His purposes.  
**Job 5:9** Who does great things, and unsearchable, Marvelous things without number.  
**Job 9:10** He does great things past finding out, Yes, wonders without number.  
**Job 26:14** Indeed these *are* the mere edges of His ways, And how small a whisper we hear of Him! But the thunder of His power who can understand?"

II. The 2<sup>nd</sup> expression of praise reflects on 3 rhetorical questions that emphasize human inability to understand God's ways. V.34-35

A. The 1<sup>st</sup> question who has known the mind of the Lord? V.34a

This is a quote from "**Isaiah 40:13** Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or *as* His counselor has taught Him?". This does not refer to the countless unrevealed things about God, which Paul is referring to, but the depths of the things which we do know through His self-revelation. Yet even these partially knowable truths conceal elements that are far beyond our comprehension.

**Deuteronomy 29:29** "The secret *things belong* to the LORD our God, but those *things which are* revealed *belong* to us and to our children forever, that *we* may do all the words of this law.

**Hebrews 4:12-13** For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. **13** And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.

B. The 2<sup>nd</sup> question who has become His counselor? V.34b

This is a quote from **Isaiah 40:13, Proverbs 11:14**.

C. The 3<sup>rd</sup> question who has first given to Him, that it should be repaid to Him? V.35

This is a quote from "**Job 41:11** Who has preceded Me, that I should pay *him*? Everything under heaven is Mine." No one can give anything to God, that was not first given. God is sovereign, self-sufficient, and free from any obligation except those He places on Himself. He owes the Jew nothing and the Gentile nothing, mankind nothing.

III. The 3<sup>rd</sup> expression of praise reflects on the ultimacy of God's wise plan. V.36

A. There must be an expression of God as the source of all things. V.36a

**Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-23**

B. There must be an expression of God as the sustainer of all things. V.36b

C. There must be an expression of God as the sanctity of all things. V.36c

God is the rightful end of things that exists. **Revelation 4:10-11; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28**