

- I. Introduction (1:1-17)
- II. Credenda: "The Righteous by Faith" Shall Live (1:18-11:36)
 - A. No justification by our own righteousness (1:18-3:20)
 - B. Justification by Faith Alone in Christ Alone (3:21-4:25)
 - C. All those that God justifies, He shall also glorify (5-8)
 - D. The Universality of God's Righteousness (9-11)
 - 9:1-5 Paul's Grief for his Unbelieving Kinsmen
 - 9:6-13 The Purpose of God According to Election
 - 9:14-29 Questions of Sovereignty & Responsibility
 - 9:30-10:21 The Righteousness by Faith in Christ
 - 11:1-10 Israel's Rejection not Total
 - 11:11-32 Israel's Rejection not Final
 - 11:33-36 Closing Doxology
- III. Agenda: The Righteous "Shall Live by Faith" (12-15:13)
- IV. Conclusion (15:14-16:27)

The Riches, Wisdom, and Knowledge of God

Romans, Part XLIII

Romans 11:33-36

Stuart W. Bryan

I. His Blood is Bibline

"Read anything [by John Bunyan], and you will see that it is almost like reading the Bible itself. . . . Why, the man is a living Bible! Prick him anywhere; and you will find that his blood is Bibline, the very essence of the Bible flows from him" (Spurgeon, Autobiography 4:268).

II. Paul's Hymn of Praise

Romans 11:33-36

³³*Oh, the depth of the riches [and] wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!*

³⁴*"For who has known the mind of the LORD?
Or who has become His counselor?"*

³⁵*"Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?"*

³⁶*For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.*

A. Exclamations of Awe (33)

Paul extols three attributes of God – His *riches*, *wisdom*, and *knowledge*.

- *Riches* – God is the _____ of all good in the world. From Him comes life and breath and all things.
- *Wisdom* – He orchestrates the best means to accomplish His ends of exalting His Name in all the earth and blessing His people.
- *Knowledge* – He knows the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that have not yet been revealed. He is _____.

B. Rhetorical Questions of Awe (34-35)

Paul's hymn then develops God's *riches*, *wisdom*, and *knowledge* with three rhetorical questions of awe that reverse the order of the three attributes he has praised:

³⁴*"For who has known the mind of the LORD? [_____]*

Or who has become His counselor?" [wisdom]

³⁵*"Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?" [_____]*

C. Prepositions of Awe (36)

Paul closes with three prepositions of awe. Charles Hodge explains this verse: *"The prepositions ek [of], dia [through], eis [to], here used, indicate that God is the source, the constantly working cause, and end of all things" (Hodge, 379).*

- The Source -
- The Constantly Working Cause -
- The End -

III. A Theology of Glory

Glory includes splendor, beauty, magnificence, radiance, and rapture... The glory of God is an image of his greatness and transcendence... To encounter the glory of God is always awe inspiring and numinous... Glory is an image of divine transcendence as it makes itself visible to people. It combines awe and terror, and it simultaneously invites approach and distance... Both sacred and dangerous, glory inspires awe, fear and respect on the part of beholders. (DBI, 330)

A. The King of Glory (Ex 33:12-23; Ps 8:1; 29:9; Is 6:1-10; Lk 5:1-11)

God is the embodiment and origin of _____. He is full of glory. So we see in Ps. 8:1 – “O Lord, our Lord, How excellent is your name in all the earth, who have set your glory above the heavens!” Everything God is and does is glorious. So the psalmist calls God “The King of Glory” (Ps. 24) and everything in God’s temple cries out, “Glory!” (Ps. 29:9).

B. Our Glorious God (Ps 24:7-10; 90:16-17)

We worship God not because God _____ *glory* but because He *is glorious*. His glory draws us in like a moth to a flame. So we sing in Psalm 24:7-10:

⁷Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. ⁸Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle. ⁹Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. ¹⁰Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah

The psalmist invites the King of Glory to come in among us because He is glorious, and we are needy. We need God to share His glory with us. *Worship is not first and foremost us giving glory to God; it is first and foremost us receiving glory from Him.* So Moses teaches us to pray in Psalm 90:16-17:

¹⁶Let Your work appear to Your servants, And Your glory to their children. ¹⁷And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us, And establish the work of our hands for us; Yes, establish the work of our hands.

C. A Glorious People (Jn 16:14-15; 17:1-5, 22; 2 Cor 3:18; Is 60:1-3)

The more we worship our glorious God, the more _____ we will become. Biblically, *glory can be imparted to others*. Because the Persons of the Godhead share glory with one another (Jn 16:14-15; 17:1-5), God freely imparts His glory to His people as well. Jesus declares, “And the glory which You [Father] gave Me I have given them...” (Jn 17:22). God the Father *shares glory* with the Son; the Son *shares that glory* with His people by pouring His Spirit upon us. So Paul writes, “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from _____ to _____, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor 3:18). Thomas Howard writes:

If God alone is all-glorious [some reason], then no one else is glorious at all. No exaltation may be admitted for any other creature, since this would endanger the exclusive prerogative of God. But this is to imagine a paltry court. What king surrounds himself with warped, dwarfish, worthless creatures? The more glorious the king, the more glorious are the titles and honors he bestows. The plumes, cockades, coronets, diadems, mantles, and rosettes that deck his retinue testify to one thing alone, his own majesty and munificence. He is a very great king to have figures of such immense dignity in his train, or even better, to have raised them to such dignity. These great lords and ladies, mantled and crowned with the highest possible honor and rank are, precisely, his vassals. This glittering array is his court! All glory to him, and in him, glory and honor to these others.

IV. Conclusion