



Part 6

2 more studies in Romans

Please Note the following:

1. It is not necessary to look up all the Bible cross references listed in a particular question; your Growth Group Leader will summarize these Bible cross references for you.
2. Just a reminder that sometimes in our Growth Groups, people feel comfortable sharing very personal and sensitive things about their lives. This information **MUST BE CONFIDENTIAL** and **NEVER LEAVE THE GROUP**

Study 1 – The Future for Israel

Romans 11:11-32

(Sermon on 09-June-2024)

Before we begin: Remind yourself what Paul's question was in Romans 11:1? What was Paul's short answer to that question in the same verse? What was Paul's long answer in Romans 11:1b-10?

Paul's question in Romans 11:1 is: "Did God reject His people?"

The short answer is: "By no means!"

The longer answer in Romans 11:1b-10 is:

- a. God didn't reject Paul – he is a Jew. **God didn't reject Paul** even though he was a persecutor of Christians!*
- b. God didn't reject the Jews – He **foreknew** there would be faithful believing Jews – but not all of them!*
- c. God didn't reject the Jews – **there has always been a faithful remnant** – like in Elijah's day – when God preserved 7000 people who did not worship the false god, Baal. And there was a faithful remnant of believing Jews in Paul's day, even in the Church of Rome. And there is a faithful remnant of believing Jews to this day!*
- d. God didn't reject the Jews. However, **only a minority (remnant) sought to be right with God by faith; the majority sought to be right with God by works; and so there were hardened – because they wanted to be hardened. This hardening was even foretold in the Old Testament by Moses, David and Isaiah.***

Read Romans 11:11-24

1. What question does Paul pose in verse 11? Why do you think he asked that question?

In verse 11, Paul asks the question: "Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery?"

Paul asks this question because the Jews are God's people and yet the majority have rejected Jesus and their hearts have been hardened. So, Paul is now wondering if this majority are lost forever and is there not a way to recover from this hardening?

2. What's Paul's short answer in verse 11?

Paul's short answer is: "Not at all!"

3. What longer answer is in verse 11b?

The longer answer is: Because of the Jews transgression (rejecting Jesus) the opportunity for the Gentiles (non-Jews) to be saved has come; and God's purpose in that, is so that the Jews who have rejected Jesus might become envious.

FOMO = Fear of missing out!

As the MSG puts it: 'Ironically when the Jews walked out, they left the door open and the Gentiles walked in. But the next thing you know, the Jews were starting to wonder if perhaps they had walked out on a good thing!'

4. What reasoning and hope does Paul give to Israel (the Jews) in verse 12?

If the Jews' rejecting Jesus has triggered this worldwide coming of non-Jewish outsiders [Gentiles] to God's kingdom, just imagine the effect of the Jews coming back one day! Won't that be magnificent!

5. What is Paul hoping the Gentiles will do for the Jews in verses 13 & 14?

Paul is hoping that his ministry to the Gentiles and their belief in Jesus might arouse envy in the Jews so that some of them come to believe in Jesus.

Wake up, you Jews!

6. What is Paul's reasoning in verse 15?

Paul's reasoning in verse 15 is that if the Jews rejection of Jesus brought worldwide reconciliation which included the Gentiles; imagine how spectacular it will be when the Jews accept Jesus; it will be like being resurrected from the dead! Which is exactly what faith in Jesus gives!

It's literally like the Jews coming back from the dead!

7. What is Paul's reasoning in verse 16?

*Paul's reasoning in verse 16 is first use the Old Testament **example of firstfruits**. God ordained a feast of firstfruits [Leviticus 23:9-14] – the idea was to thank God and give back to Him the first and best part of the harvests.*

The idea for verse 16 is drawn from Numbers 15:17-21 – where the first of the dough [loaf] was given to the Lord and thus the whole batch of dough was consecrated as holy to the Lord!

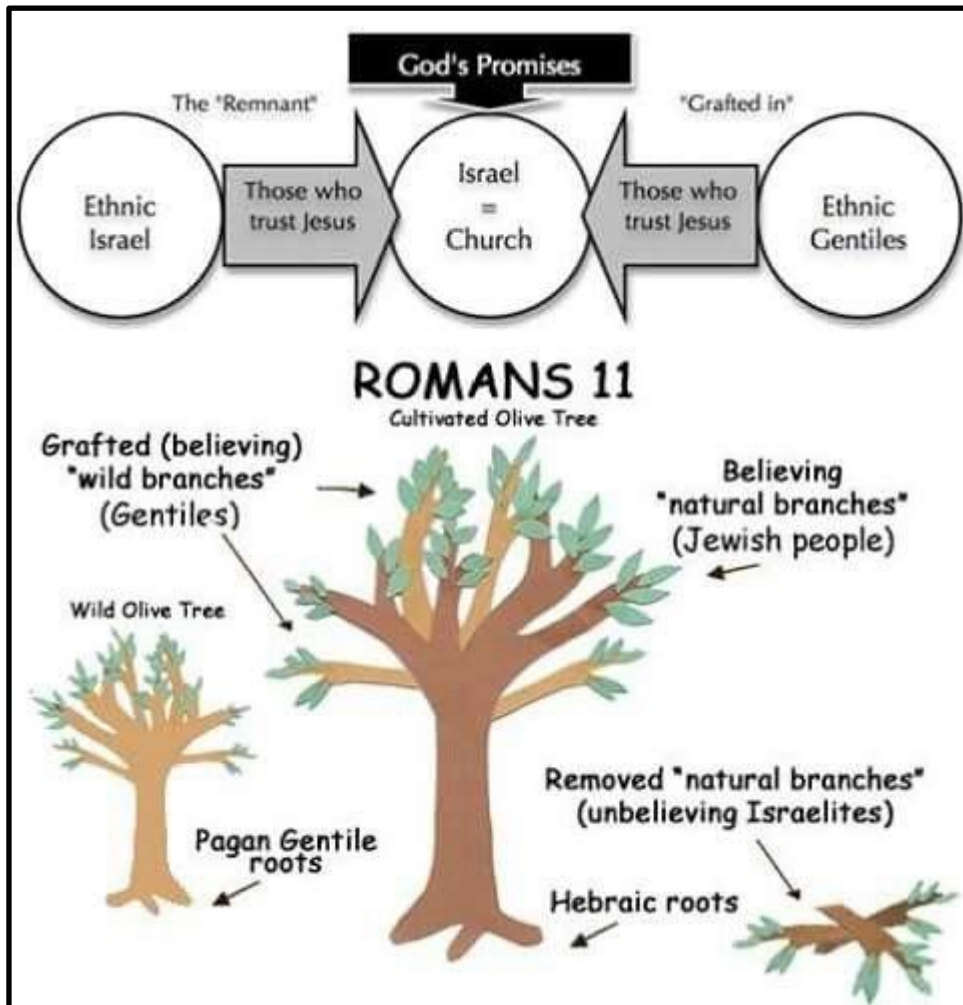
Paul's saying the first fruits of believers in the remnant of Jewish believers were the patriarchs [Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David et al] and so the rest of the Jews are considered to be holy because of the patriarchs!

Likewise, the “root” in this verse is the patriarchs and the branches are the rest of the Jews!

In this verse, Paul is laying down the fact that there is hope for all of ethnic Israel!

8. What horticultural example does Paul use in verses 16 to 21 to describe the body of believers consisting of Gentiles and Jews? Perhaps draw a picture?

*The use of an **Olive tree** to describe the people of God (Israel) is not a new concept. See Jeremiah 11:16-17 and Hosea 14:6.*



V17 – natural branches NOT cut off = remnant of believing Jews (Israelites)

V17, V19, 21 –natural branches broken off/removed = unbelieving Jews (Israelites)

V17 – wild olive shoot grafted in = Gentile believers

V17 – root = Hebrew root of the Patriarchs

V23 –branches grafted back in = those who do not continue in unbelief and become believing Jews (Israelites)

9. What warning does Paul give in verse 18? Who is Paul warning?

Paul is warning the Gentiles the branches from the wild olive shoot that have been grafted in to the Olive of Tree of Israel. Paul tells the Gentiles that they are not to get arrogant and puffed up and think they are superior to the natural branches representing the believing Jews.

The Gentiles, as branches grafted into the Jewish Olive tree, need to remember they are supported by the Jewish root; not the other way around!

10. What warning does Paul give in verses 20 & 21? Why?

Just because the Gentiles are branches grafted into the tree because the branches of unbelieving Jews were cut off shouldn't make the Gentiles be arrogant. If God didn't spare the natural branches; He won't spare the Gentiles if they get arrogant. As the MSG puts it: "If God didn't think twice about taking pruning shears to the natural branches, why would he hesitate over you? He wouldn't give it a second thought."

11. What does Paul call us to consider in verse 22?

Paul says that we need to consider how God balances his sternness to those who rejected Jesus and were cut off, with His kindness to the Gentiles in allowing them to be grafted in to the Olive Tree. The Gentiles (and us) need to be mindful that we continue in God's kindness and not presume anything.

Again, the MSG is helpful with this verse: "Make sure you stay alert to these qualities of gentle kindness and ruthless severity that exist side by side in God—ruthless with the deadwood, gentle with the grafted shoot. But don't presume on this gentleness. The moment you become deadwood, it's game over."

12. What is God able to do for those Jews who 'do not persist in unbelief' in verse 23?

For the Jews who 'do not persist in unbelief', God is able to graft them back into the Olive Tree!

13. What reasoning is Paul using in verse 24?

It is more difficult to graft into the Jewish Olive Tree - the Gentiles – who are branches from a wild olive – than it is to graft in the natural Jewish branches into their own Jewish Olive Tree, which they came from in the first place!

Read Romans 11:25-32

14. What **mystery** does Paul describe in verses 25 to 27? What support does he have for this from the Old Testament (cf. **Isaiah 59:20-21**; Isaiah 27:9)

*In v25, Paul describes a **mystery**. Israel's hardness is temporary so that the full number of non-Jews (Gentiles) can become believers and be part of the Olive Tree. But the mystery is that this hardness is not permanent because Paul says in v26 this is how "all Israel will be saved!"*

Paul uses quotes from Isaiah to support his statement.

*Isaiah 59:20-21 – "The Redeemer will come to Zion, **to those in Jacob who repent of their sins**," declares the LORD. ²¹ "As for me, this is my covenant with them," says the LORD. **"My Spirit, who is on you, will not depart from you**, and my words that I have put in your mouth will always be on your lips, on the lips of your children and on the lips of their descendants—from this time on and forever," says the LORD.*

*Isaiah 27:9 – By this, then, will **Jacob's guilt be atoned for, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin**: When he makes all the altar stones to be like limestone crushed to pieces, no Asherah poles or incense altars will be left standing.*

Isaiah 27:9 (Septuagint) - Therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be taken away; and this is his blessing, when I shall have taken away his sin; when they shall have broken to pieces all the stones of the altars as fine dust, and their trees shall not remain, and their idols shall be cut off, as a thicket afar off.

These verses talk of a "redeemer from Zion (Jerusalem)" who will "atone" and "take away their sins". This is clearly Jesus and is speaking of when Christ returns in glory.

What Paul is saying is that at some point "Israel" as a whole will experience salvation through Jesus.

So, "all" here in verse 26 does not necessarily mean 'every Jew without exception' but "Israel" as a whole.

*In the context of the chapter – the "all" of verse 26 means: **a great mass of the Jewish people**. That is how the word "Israel" is used throughout the chapter. Paul often uses "Israel" to refer to the majority of Israel over and against the minority of believing Jews. That is, though he himself is part of Israel ethnically, he does not include himself when he speaks of "Israel" rejecting the Gospel.*

New Bible Commentary says: Verse 25 makes it likely that salvation of all Israel (v26a) is to take place after the full number of the Gentiles has come in... Paul has

repeatedly shown, the manner in which God will bring Israel to salvation is as the last stage in a historical process.

*Therefore, it is unlikely Paul is talking about the salvation of Jews throughout history. Equally improbable is the view held by the Reformers that Paul is referring to the salvation of the entire church [‘the Israel of God’ – Galatians 6:16ff]. Israel in chapters 9 to 11 is the **ethnic race rather than the spiritual entity** and the contrast made in verse 25 makes the meaning of ethnic Israel more likely here!*

Paul is describing an event that will take place at the end of history when Christ returns in glory, when as Isaiah 59:20-21 puts it ‘the deliverer will come from Zion’ and Israel’s sins are taken away (verses 26b-27).

“All” Israel has a corporate sense: what is meant is not every single Israelite in the last generation but, in contrast to the present meagre number of believers, a number large enough to represent the Jewish race as a whole!

Some scholars argue that God will save Israel in ‘a special way’ apart from conscious faith in Jesus; but this is incorrect and contrary to Scripture. The salvation of all Israel will take place as individual Israelites of that day place their faith in Jesus (as v23 says – ‘if they do not persist in their unbelief’). Faith in Jesus is the only means of salvation for Jew and Gentile (Romans 1:16-17; 10:11-13 and John 14:6).

Therefore, we should be encouraged to pray for and evangelise to Jewish people.

15. How should a Gentile Christian view the Jewish non-Christians in verse 28?
On what basis? **Hint:** verses 28 and 29?

*From the Gentiles point of view as they hear and embrace the good news of Jesus, it looks like the Jews are God’s enemies. But looked at from the long-range perspective of God’s overall purpose, God loves the Jews because of His promises to their ancestors “the patriarchs” and God’s gifts (promises) and His call [to make Israel His people] are irrevocable! **God still has a plan for Israel!***

16. How should a Gentile Christian view the Jewish non-Christians in verses 30 and 31?

In the same way that the Gentiles were once disobedient and then received mercy; the Gentiles are to view Jewish non-Christians in the same way as now disobedient in order that they might also receive mercy, as a result of God having mercy on the Gentiles.

17. What conclusion does Paul make in verse 32? **Ponder:** How should the “*all*” be viewed in verse 32? Is Paul teaching universal salvation here?

Verse 32 is the conclusion to the section that started in chapter 9 verse 1 – when Paul began his concern for his fellow Jews.

Because Paul uses the word “all” for those God will have mercy on, many have thought that Paul is teaching universal salvation and that eventually God will simply have mercy on all and save all! But the rest of Paul’s letter to the Romans does not allow us to interpret this in such a way. Romans 2:5-8 tells us clearly that some will receive God’s judgment and punishment at the end. Instead, we should understand verse 32 along with verses 30-31 as teaching that God is not showing preference. He uses the Jews to reach the Gentiles and He uses the Gentiles to reach the Jews. All peoples – both Jews and Gentiles – have been disobedient, and yet all peoples – from the Jews and Gentiles – will find God’s mercy. God’s mercy is coming to “all” means that as F.F. Bruce puts it, God’s mercy is coming “on all without distinction” (whether Jew or Gentile), rather than “on all without exception”

What’s the **BIG IDEA** of Romans 11:11-32?

God has a plan for ethnic Israel – we should be praying for them and evangelizing them!



What **light globe moment** did you have in this study?

What **questions** do you have about the passages in this study?

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

²⁵ I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, ²⁶ and in this way all Israel will be saved

Finish in prayer: Thank God for His boundless grace and mercy shown in Romans 11:11-32. Thank God that His plan of salvation includes both Jews and Gentiles, revealing His infinite wisdom and kindness.

Study 2 – Doxology

Romans 11:33-36

(Sermon on 16-June-2024)

Before we begin: Write down a definition of doxology. What is the etymology (*the origin of the word*) of the word doxology?

Definition: **doxology** means “expression of praise or giving glory to God”

Etymology: a combination of Greek word “doxa” meaning glory and logos “speaking” – so doxology literally means “speaking glory” about God! Just like “eulogy” is a combination of “eu” which means “good” and logos “speaking”. So, at a funeral we “speak good” of the deceased person!

1. When do we put into practice doxology?

- When we give God glory or praise in our **worship service** – through prayers, singing hymns – and we even sing a doxology to praise God for His provision of the financial and material needs of our church
- When we pray **individually** – our prayers can consist of 4 parts – (A)doration; (C)onfession; (T)hanksgiving and (S)upplication (shopping list). The Adoration and Thanksgiving parts of our prayers give praise and glory to God.
- When we **talk about what God has done for us** that is doxology
- When we read parts of **God’s Word**, then often give praise and glory to God – for example, many of the psalms!

2. What is **glory** when related to God?

When related to God – glory can mean:

- God’s glory means - **recognizing, acknowledging and declaring God’s greatness, worthiness, and authority**. Giving God all the credit for who He is and what He does! This involves worship, praise, and thanksgiving, acknowledging His supreme position and offering honor that is due to Him.
- God’s glory also means – **God’s inherent majesty and splendour** – often depicted in the Bible as a radiant light of a dazzling brilliance that emanates from God, symbolizing His supreme beauty, holiness, and overwhelming magnificence of His presence.
- God’s glory also means **God’s visible and tangible manifestation of His presence**. In the Bible, God’s glory is revealed in various forms: such as a pillar of cloud and fire that guided the Israelites through the wilderness (Exodus 13:21-22); God’s glory that filled the tabernacle and temple (Exodus

40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:10-11) and God's presence at the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9)

- God's glory can also be reflected in the lives of believers through their actions, character and witness. Christians are called to live a life in a way that honours God and makes His glory known to others (Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 10:31)

For the last eleven chapters Paul has been giving his comprehensive account of the Gospel. Step by step he has shown how God has revealed His way of putting sinners right with Himself through Christ. Write a summary of Paul's teaching...

Romans 1:1-17 – Paul introduces himself and his mission. Paul presents his theme: **the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel** (Good News of Jesus' death and resurrection) which is the **power of God to save all who believe**.

Romans 1:18-3:20 – The **universal sinfulness of humanity which deserves God's wrath**

Romans 3:21-31 – **Justification [being right with God] by faith**: Paul explains that righteousness from God comes from **faith in Jesus Christ alone**, for all who care to believe in Him. This justification is a gift of grace, not based on human effort or works, but on faith!

Romans 4 – The example of Abraham being justified by faith!

Romans 5 – Describes the result of justification – peace and reconciliation with God. Paul contrasts effects of Adam's sin with the grace and life brought through Jesus

Romans 6 – A new life in Jesus Christ. Dead to sin and alive in Jesus

Romans 7 – The struggle/conflict between the desire to do good and our sinful nature

Romans 8 - A new life in the Spirit.

Romans 9-11 – Paul's desire for Israel to be saved – and the issue of Israel's unbelief. But God has a plan. Paul uses the illustration of an Olive Tree – where the unbelieving Jews are broken-off branches; the Gentiles are grafted in from a wild olive shoot; and in the future, many Jews believe and are grafted back in to the Olive Tree.

Read Romans 11:33-36

1. How does Paul worship God in verse 33?

*Paul worships God by expressing the depths of the riches of **God's wisdom and knowledge** – and how **unsearchable** His judgments are – and how God's paths (ways) are **beyond tracing out** (past finding out)*

2. Look up the following Old Testament verses which relate to verse 33 and explain how they support verse 33:

- **Job 5:9**

He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted.

- **Job 11:7**

*“Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you **probe the limits of the Almighty**?*

- **Psalm 139:1-6**

1 You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.

2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

4 Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.

5 You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.

*6 **Such knowledge is too wonderful for me**, too lofty for me to attain.*

God is omniscient – He knows everything!

- **Ecclesiastes 8:17**

Then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all their efforts to search it out, no one can discover its meaning. Even if the wise claim they know, they cannot really comprehend it.

- **Isaiah 40:28**

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

3. How does Paul worship in verse 34?

Paul worships God in regards to the superiority of God's mind and the fact that no-one can give God advice or counselling!

4. Look up the following Old Testament verses which relate to verse 34 and explain how they support verse 34:

- **Isaiah 40:13-14**

¹³ Who can fathom the Spirit of the LORD, or instruct the LORD as his counselor? ¹⁴ Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge, or showed him the path of understanding?

- **Job 15:8**

Job's friend Eliphaz questions Job's wisdom compared to God's... Do you listen in on God's council? Do you have a monopoly on wisdom?

- **Job 36:22**

"God is exalted in his power. Who is a teacher like him?"

- **Jeremiah 23:18**

Jeremiah was talking about lying prophets and says this about them... But which of them has stood in the council of the Lord to see or to hear his word? Who has listened and heard his word?

5. How does Paul worship in verse 35?

Paul worships God in verse 35 by saying that everything we have comes from God; so we can't give Him anything and expect Him to repay us? We wouldn't have anything, if it were not for Him in the first place!

6. Look up the following Old Testament verses which relate to verse 35 and explain how they support verse 35:

- **Job 41:11**

God says to Job...

Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me.

- **Job 35:7**

Job's friend Elihu questions if God is so righteous, what can Job actually give God – since everything belongs to God in the first place ...

If you are righteous, what do you give to him, or what does he receive from your hand?

7. How does Paul worship in verse 36?

Paul worships God and says in verse 36: Everything comes from God; everything that happens, happens through God; everything happens for God! He's the one that deserves all the glory (credit).

*From this we can see that God is **omnipotent** (all-powerful); **omniscient** (knows everything) and **omnipresent** (everywhere – in Heaven and on Earth)*

8. Look up the following New Testament verses which relate to verse 36 and explain how they support verse 36:

- **1 Corinthians 8:6**

This verse shows the equality of the Father and Son...

*Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, **from whom all things came and for whom we live**; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, **through whom all things came and through whom we live**.*

- **1 Corinthians 11:12**

*For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. **But everything comes from God**.*

- **Colossians 1:15-16**

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.

- **Hebrews 2:10**

*In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, **for whom and through whom everything exists**, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered.*

- **Romans 16:27**
to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.
- **Ephesians 3:20-21**
Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.
- **1 Timothy 1:17**
Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.
- **1 Peter 5:11**
To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.
- **Jude 1:25**
to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.
- **Revelation 5:13**
Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"
- **Revelation 7:12**
The angels stand around the throne in Heaven: saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

9. **Challenge:** As you reflect on what Paul has taught you in Romans 11:1-11 – write your own **doxology**. The minister is happy to publish this as an insert in the bulletin, if you email it to him...

*To the all-knowing, all-powerful, ever-present God of all wisdom and mercy,
Who justifies the ungodly by faith in Jesus,*

*Who does not treat us as our sins deserve and instead lavishes grace upon us and calls us His own,
Who gives us peace through Jesus Christ our Lord,
To Him be glory, honor, and power,
Forever and ever.
Amen.*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of Romans 11:33-36?

How the grace and mercy of God deserves our doxology (praise and glory to God)



What **light globe moment** did you have in this study?

- *I'm convicted why I would ever question God when I know when He is all-knowing, all-powerful and everywhere!*
- *We can't have theology without doxology and we can't have doxology without theology – they are inseparable!*

What **questions** do you have about the passages in this study?

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

V36 - For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

Finish in prayer: Thank God for the depth of the riches of His wisdom and knowledge. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Studies prepared by Paul O'Rourke
May 2024

Resources:

The MacArthur Study Bible

New Bible Commentary (Carson, France, Moyter & Wenham)

Romans 8 to 16 for you (Timothy Keller)

The Message of Romans (John Stott)

Romans (Geoffrey B. Wilson)

Romans 1 to 8 (William Hendrikson)

The Epistle to the Romans (Floyd E. Hamilton)

The Epistle to the Romans (John Murray)