*Northwest Bible Church – January 23, 2005 Worship Service – Alan Conner*
**Romans 11:33-36**
*Paul’s Doxology of Praise to God*

**INTRO**
    Paul concludes this section of profound and difficult theological concepts with a hymn of praise of God for his purposes and plans. Doxology = a word of praise to God. Some say that this doxology is the conclusion of the whole book of Romans so far, others say it as the conclusion of 9-11. Both can make a good case.
    The praise is based on God’s plan of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles. God has so arranged salvation history so as to maximize his glory in how He chose to dispense His mercy at the appointed times to both Jews and Gentiles. In both cases it involves our great sin and God’s great and sovereign mercy.

**A. PRAISE FOR THE DEPTH OF GOD’S REDEMPTIVE CHARACTER (v. 33)**
    1) Praise for God’s wisdom and knowledge.

        “depth” - indicates that they are beyond our ability to penetrate into its deeper regions.

        “riches” - the incredible and priceless value of God’s redemptive blessings.

    And this incredible depth and magnitude of God’s riches applies to His wisdom and knowledge.

        “wisdom” – expressed in his plan for the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles.

        “Knowledge” – omniscience, foreordination, and God’s special knowledge of His elect.                     Cf. 2Tim. 2:19.

    2) Praise for God’s unsearchable judgments.

        unsearchable - can’t search out because too far like the distant galaxies. unfathomable - untrackable like dogs who lose the scent at the water’s edge.

            God’s judgments and ways are inaccessible to human beings.

judgments – God’s judgments (plural), may be either God’s judgments on unbelievers, or of His administrative judgments in guiding and directing the whole plan of salvation.

    3) Praise for God’s unfathomable/untraceable ways.

        The “ways” of God refer to how He acts towards His creatures. It refers to God’s ways in how He has ordered the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles.

**B. PRAISE FOR THE LOFTINESS OF GOD’S WISDOM (vv. 34-35).**
    In this section, Paul asks three rhetorical questions which expect the answer, “NO ONE.”

        POINT: because of God’s infinite wisdom, He cannot be challenged or questioned by finite human beings. Psa. 147:5 Great is our Lord, and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite.

    1) “Who has known the mind of the Lord?”

This must be qualified however, because what Paul has in mind is that no human can by himself come to know the mind of God. On as God reveals His mind and wisdom to us can we know it, cf. 1 Cor. 2:6-16.

    2) “Or who became His counselor?”

Cf. Is. 55:8-9 and Eph. 1:11.

            BEWARE: The Openness of God

    3) “Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again?” Cf. Job 41:11

Paul uses this to silence those who think they can put God in their debt by giving Him something He does not already have. Cf. Acts 17:24-25.

**C. PRAISE FOR GOD’S ALL-ENCLUSIVE AND GLORIOUS PLAN (v. 36).**
    “For” gives reason for vv. 34-35.

        “ALL THINGS” – universal scope
        “FROM HIM” - source of all things - Sovereign Planner
        “THROUGH HIM” – means/agent of all things (Creator and Sustainer)
        “TO HIM” – goal of all things -

        Response: To God be ETERNAL GLORY. Amen.

**CONCLUSION**
    1) Praise songs must have sound biblical content.
    2) The doctrine of election is front and center in this doxology.
    3) Praising God is our sacred duty and delight.
    4) Live Soli Deo Gloria.