

**An Awesome God.** Romans 11:33-36

*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 counsellor?"*

*"Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?"*

*For from him and through him and to him are all things.*

*To him be the glory forever! Amen.*

### **Introduction:**

Our society is so busy with itself that it seldom takes the time to consider the eternal things. To think about God, his Work, his Kingdom - even his Son, our Saviour.

But we need to take the time to ask some most important questions. Who is God? How can we describe Him? What do we know about his character? How does he deal with humans? Does he have a plan for our lives and our planet, our society and our world? How does he work out his plan for us, his church and the future? How can we know him? These are important questions which are worthy of our reflection and prayerful consideration.

Paul has been trying to answer questions such as these in his letter to the Romans. He has brought us into an encounter with God in this letter. When we have an encounter with the living God, we can never go away from such an experience without being affected. There is something about thinking about our awesome God that moves us. It certainly moved Paul. He can not avoid breaking out in song and praise. He cannot avoid glorifying the Lord!

### **A true encounter with God inspires his Praise**

Encountering God inspires His praise. We see this in Paul's opening declaration: **Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!**

This is his response to deeply thinking about God. In writing this letter to the Christians in Rome, Paul attempted to present a complete understanding of God and his plan for our lives, our salvation, for his Church and for his Kingdom. These thoughts trigger Paul to burst forth into a joyful song of praise. Simply writing all of these teachings about God down, has caused Paul to connect with the living God. And the result of this, is authentic, heartfelt praise.

Praise is the normal response to an encounter with God. When we are guided into the presence of the majesty of God, we stand in awe. We experience how wonderful He is. We see his glory, observe his goodness and experience his love. It takes our breath away. It causes us to burst forth into glorious praise.

In heaven, praising God is the normal state of affairs. We see it clearly in the Book of Revelation. Around the throne of God the heavenly creatures are constantly praising the Lord. It is probably impossible to be in God's presence and to not praise Him. Encountering God inspires His praise.

### **A true encounter with God discloses his transcendence**

Encountering God not only inspires his praise, but encountering God discloses his transcendence too. Paul wants to shout this out: **How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!**

All too often we think about God in human terms. We think that he is like we are. This is not altogether wrong. But it is not so much that God is like us, than that we are like him.. We reflect his image. But to think that we are anything but a pale reflection of Gods awesomeness, is to make a serious mistake. Yes, we are like God in some ways, but we cannot even begin to be compared with him. God is beyond our comprehension. God is by nature incomprehensible. We must confess that we are limited in our understanding and experience of God.

This is what we mean by God's transcendence. God transcends not only our understanding of him, but also our experience of him. God is beyond us. Isaiah states it clearly in Isaiah 55:8-9.

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."*

It is good for us to confess that we cannot truly understand God. We cannot figure out who he is. But we can learn to trust that he knows what he is doing and that he will do what is right. From time to time we may have some understanding of his marvellous plan, his salvation and his purpose. We can be grateful of what we learn. But when we truly encounter God, we will stand in awe of how glorious he is. You will confess, you will sing, you will praise him as the transcendent one. You will be inspired by the knowledge that you can never trace out his paths.

#### **A true encounter with God reveals his sufficiency!**

Encountering God inspires His praise and we stand in awe of his transcendence. But there is more. Encountering God reveals his sufficiency.

Paul continues by referring to Isaiah and Job. **"Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor?" "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?"** Paul is emphasising the fact that God is sufficient in himself. He needs nothing from us. He owes us nothing. We can never give anything to God that results in God being in debt with us.

It is ridiculous to think that anyone can be God's teacher. Can we teach God something new? We do sometimes in arrogance that we can counsel God, that we know better than he does. We would have taken better decisions than he did.

But the truth is that God does not need our advice. And the reason is, because he is sufficient. That is why we may call him a sovereign God. He is not accountable to us for what he does. Because he is sufficient, his plan is perfect and truthful. His counsel is beyond us. What he does is perfect, holy and inspired by divine love.

God's sufficiency makes God is the source of our supply. God is our complete provision for all our needs. God is sufficient and we are the recipients of that sufficiency. We draw upon his sufficiency, because we receive what we need as believers. His Son and our Saviour is the source for all we need. Christ Jesus is what we need.

#### **A true encounter with God declares his centrality**

This next declaration that Paul makes is a profound one. It reveals that God is central to everything we know and everything that exists - in heaven and on earth.

**For from him and through him and to him are all things.**

God stands in the centre of history. God is central to all of creation. In terms of our human experience, God is central. In terms of the continuance of the whole universe, God is central. In terms of the future of humanity, God is central.

Paul says about God that all things are **from, through, and to Him**. This means he is the originator, sustainer, and goal of all things. ***He created all, maintains all, and will receive all back to Himself.*** (also see Colossians 1:16-17.)

The God we serve is an awesome God. Just in his creation alone, he has revealed his awesome power. This awesome God will receive all that he has created back to himself one day. God sustains

all. Without God this entire universe would fall apart. To encounter God is to understand his centrality in all things.

**Therefore a true encounter with God demands his Glory**

Encountering God demands His glory.

Paul says – **To him be the glory forever! Amen.**

To encounter God is to understand that he is the only one in the universe to whom all glory is due. His whole creation praise him and witness to the glory of God. Every man, woman and child will one day acknowledge his glory. When we look at the marvellous plan of salvation given through Jesus Christ, we know that one day all of the nations of the earth will bow before him and give glory to God.

*Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,  
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11)*

**Appeal:**

We have the privilege to give glory to God when we worship him, when we live for him and when we surrender to him. Only the holy God is worthy of glorification. He is worthy of praise. One of the highest privileges we have as human beings, is giving glory to an almighty, awesome God.

One important lesson that we see from Paul's hymn of praise, is that we need to spend enough time thinking about and reflecting on the greatness of our awesome God. We must meditate upon the implications of his existence. We must encounter his amazing plan of salvation. We must contemplate his nature and his character.

More importantly, must we desire to experience his power and his grace. When we do, our lives will be lived in praise to God. Our true joy will be to live in reverence of our awesome God!

This is the Word of God.

Amen.