

Romans 11:1-6a
(Psalm 145; John 6:35-40)
“Speaking The Truth In Christ”

Introduction

This past week I had the privilege of visiting Havana, Cuba, for the first time. It was helpful for me to look at maps of the city before my trip, and then to look at the city from the sky while flying in, in order that I might always have a sense of where I was when I was down at street level. And that is what I propose to do today: “fly over” chapters 9-11 and note three key themes that must be kept in balance whenever we land to study a particular section. Too often unbalanced doctrinal debates have taken place by quoting one part or another of this middle section of Paul’s Roman letter without reference to his entire flow of argument.

At the end of chapter eight, we heard a powerfully stirring reminder that nothing can separate us from God’s love in Christ Jesus. But the question naturally arose: If nothing can separate God’s people from his love, then why did Israel reject her Messiah? Paul sets out to answer that question in these three chapters, and along the way he offers us helpful pictures of things necessary for us to take our place in God’s great mission of reclaiming both his people and his world.

Body

1. Note, first, the love that drives the mission.

- *Paul’s love: His self-sacrificial willingness (like both Moses and Jesus) to lay down his life for the salvation of his people (9:1-3; 10:1; 11:1-2a).*
- *God’s love: His amazing grace toward disobedient sinners (9:18; 11:32).*

2. Note, secondly, three certainties that give us proper confidence as we pursue the mission:

- *God is sovereign in salvation (9:14-20).*
- *People are responsible for their response to God’s grace (10:9-13).*
- *God has but one family and he will save all of his children (11:25-29).*

3. Note, finally, a great uncertainty that gives us winsome humility as we pursue the mission:

- *God’s ways are beyond our understanding (11:33-36).*

Conclusion

What confidence and what humility the gospel brings, and love that is deeper, wider and stronger than any merely human love! Orthodoxy leads to doxology: “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”

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