

This portion concludes the “doctrinal” part of the epistle to the Romans before Paul proceeds to more practical matters in the rest of the book. Think of the ground we have covered and the questions we have grappled with so far – questions about man’s righteousness before God and the struggle for it in daily life. Questions about the law and sin. Questions about our freedom to choose versus the inevitability of the divine will (or fate, if you prefer). These knotty questions have puzzled mankind for centuries and we may not fully understand all the answers in this life.

Questions:

1. Does this section speak of Israel and Gentiles as individuals or nations?
2. Explain verse 15.
3. \What does the olive tree represent? What is the root? The branches?
4. (Gardener’s bonus question) Why is grafting a wild branch onto a cultivated root contrary to nature (v. 24)?

But we do have one steadfast anchor of the soul: “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Confusion withers away in light of God’s love and mercy expressed in His Son.

And this section concludes with the final exclamation, “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”

5. What does verse 20 mean by a branch being broken off? Apply this to Israel and the Gentiles. When will the full number of Gentiles come in and all Israel be saved (verses 25-26)?
6. What evidence do we have here that the nation of Israel is not permanently removed from God's "most favored nation" status?
7. Why is the whole sad history of Israel in the Old Testament important for Gentiles? Why could Christ not simply come in Adam's day?
8. What attributes of God can be discerned in verses 33-36?