

## **11:13 *Paul's Ministry***

### **My Ministry.**

Origen: What is more worthy than to magnify the ministry which one has received by the providence of God? For the man who ministers well magnifies his ministry, while on the other hand the one who has ministered negligently and unworthily dishonors his ministry and draws unfavorable comment on it. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.<sup>15</sup>

## **11:14 *Seeking to Save Fellow Jews***

### **My Fellow Jews.**

Origen: By his attentive care and close attention to the teaching of the Gentiles and by making their behavior worthy of eternal life, Paul is inviting and provoking the Jews who see these things and who are his kinsmen according to the flesh to imitate those who are progressing in the faith of God. It is the glory of his ministry that he can use the teaching of the Gentiles to reach some of his own people as well. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.<sup>19</sup>

Chrysostom: Paul appears to be blaming the Gentiles and to be humbling their conceits, but he gives a gentle provocation to the Jews as well. He tries to veil their great ruin, but he cannot do so because the facts are too clear. Homilies on Romans 19.<sup>20</sup>

## **11:15 *Life from the Dead***

### **Others Gained from Their Sins.**

Chrysostom: This also condemns the Jews, because although others gained from their sins, they did not profit from the good works of others. Homilies on Romans 19.<sup>26</sup>

## **11:16 *Root and Branch***

## **11:17 *A Wild Branch Grafted to a Good Tree***

### **A Wild Olive Shoot.**

Clement of Alexandria: The graft uses as soil the tree in which it is grafted. Now all the plants sprouted forth simultaneously in consequence of the divine order. Wherefore also, though the wild olive is wild, it crowns the Olympic victors.... Now we see that the wild trees attract more nutriment because they cannot ripen. The wild trees therefore have less power of secretion than those that are cultivated. And the cause of their wildness is the absence of the power of secretion. The engrafted olive accordingly receives more

nutriment from its growing in the cultivated one, and it gets accustomed, as it were, to secrete the nutriment, becoming thus assimilated to the fatness of the cultivated tree. Stromata 6.15.35

### **Progress by Faith.**

Irenaeus: If the wild olive takes kindly to the graft ... it becomes a fruit bearing olive.... So likewise men shall be spiritual if they progress by faith to better things and receive the Spirit of God and bring forth the fruit. Against Heresies 5.10.1.36

## **11:18 *The Root Supports the Branches***

### **The Engrafted Branch Need Not Struggle Against Its Root.**

Jerome: Whenever I see a synagogue, the thought of the apostle always comes to me—that we should not boast against the olive tree whose branches have been broken off but rather fear. For if the natural branches have been cut off, how much more we who have been grafted on the wild olive should fear, lest we become like them. Homilies on the Psalms 11.41

## **11:19 *Grafted into the Good Tree***

### **Grafted into the Good Olive Tree.**

Cyril of Jerusalem: When you were stripped you were anointed with exorcised olive oil, from the topmost hairs of your head to the soles of your feet, and became partakers of the good olive tree, Jesus Christ. Cuttings from the wild olive tree, you were grafted into the good olive tree and became partakers of the richness of the true olive tree. The Mystagogical Lectures 2.3.46

## **11:20 *Broken Off by Unbelief***

Origen: Who is the one from whom they have been broken off but he in whom they have not believed? 48  
Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.49

### **They in Effect Broke Themselves Off.**

Chrysostom: It was not God who cut them off but rather they broke themselves off and fell.... You see what a great thing man's free choice is, how great the working of the mind is. For none of these things is immutable, neither your good nor their evil. Homilies on Romans 19.51

## **11:21 *Judgment and Grace***

Basil: Judgment will be in accordance with grace, and the Judge will make examination of how you have used the graces bestowed upon you.54 Homily 20.55

## **11:22 *God's Kindness and Severity***

### **Salvation Comes from Grace.**

Chrysostom: Paul does not point to human works but to the goodness of God as a reminder to us that our salvation comes from God's grace and to make us tremble. Homilies on Romans 19.58

## **11:23 *God's Power***

### **11:24 *God is Able to Recover His Own***

#### **What Faith Can Accomplish.**

Chrysostom: If faith could do what was contrary to nature, how much more will it be able to accomplish that which is according to nature. For if the Gentile, who was cut off from his natural fathers and came, contrary to nature, to Abraham, how much more will God be able to recover his own! Homilies on Romans 19.66

## **11:25 *Understanding a Mystery***

### **Jews Believe in Christ.**

Chrysostom: Part of the Jewish people have been blinded, but not all, for many of them already have believed in Christ. Homilies on Romans 19.1

## **11:26 *A Deliverer from Zion All Israel Will Be Saved***

Origen: What "all Israel" means or what the fullness of the Gentiles will be only God knows along with his only begotten Son and perhaps a few of his friends, as he said: "I no longer call you servants but friends, for I have made known to you everything which I have heard from my Father." 6 Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.7

### **A Truer Israel.**

Augustine: Not all the Jews were blind; some of them recognized Christ. But the fullness of the Gentiles comes in among those who have been called according to the plan, and there arises a truer Israel of God ... the elect from both the Jews and the Gentiles. Letter 149.10

### **Israel Called at the End.**

Cyril of Alexandria: Although it was rejected, Israel will also be saved eventually, a hope which Paul confirms by quoting this text of Scripture. For indeed, Israel will be saved in its own time and will be called at the end, after the calling of the Gentiles. Explanation of the Letter to the Romans.12

## **11:27 Fulfilling the Covenant**

### **When I Take Away Their Sins.**

Chrysostom: God's covenant will be fulfilled not when they are circumcised, nor when they do the other deeds of the law, but when they obtain forgiveness of sins. If this has been promised but has not yet happened in their case, nor have they enjoyed the forgiveness of sins in baptism, nevertheless it will certainly come to pass. Homilies on Romans 19.16

## **11:28 Beloved for the Sake of Their Ancestors**

Chrysostom: When the Gentiles believed, the Jews became even more obnoxious. But even now God has not stopped calling the Gentiles. He is waiting for all of them who are to believe to come in, and then the rest of the Jews will come as well. Homilies on Romans 19.20

## **11:29 God's Call is Irrevocable**

### **Irrevocable.**

Augustine: For God to order his future works in his foreknowledge, which cannot be deceived or changed, is entirely (and nothing other than) to predestine. But just as he whom God has foreknown to be chaste, although this may be unclear to him, acts in such a way as to be chaste, so he whom God has predestined to be chaste, although this may be unclear to him, does not, simply because he hears that by God's gift he will be what he will be, fail to act so as to be chaste. Indeed, his charity is delighted, and he is not puffed up as if he had not received it. Not only is he not hindered from the work of charity by the preaching of predestination, but on the contrary he is helped in this task, so that when he glories he may glory in the Lord.<sup>23</sup> Gift of Perseverance 17.<sup>24</sup>

## **11:30 Mercy Through the Jews' Disobedience**

### **Cleansed by the Same Grace.**

Cyril of Alexandria: Paul shows that both Jews and Gentiles were guilty of the same thing and that they were likewise cleansed by one and the same grace. Explanation of the Letter to the Romans.<sup>30</sup>

## **11:31 *Mercy Shown to the Jews***

### **11:32 *God's Mercy on All***

#### **Consigned All to Disobedience.**

Jerome: This is complete righteousness in man, not to impute any virtue that he can attain to himself but rather to the Lord, the giver. Against the Pelagians 13.37

Augustine: The apostle did not mean by these words that God would not condemn anybody. What he meant is made clear by the context. Paul was speaking about those Jews who would one day believe. The City of God 21.24.38

#### **Consigned by Divine Permission, Not by Divine Action.**

John of Damascus: This is not to be taken in the sense of God acting but in the sense of God permitting, because of free will and because virtue is not forced. Orthodox Faith 4.19.41

## **11:33 *God's Unsearchable Ways***

#### **How Unsearchable His Ways.**

Origen: Paul did not say that God's judgments were hard to search out but that they could not be searched out at all. He did not say that God's ways were hard to find out but that they were impossible to find out. For however far one may advance in the search and make progress through an increasingly earnest study, even when aided and enlightened in the mind by God's grace, he will never be able to reach the final goal of his inquiries. On First Principles 4.3.14.43

#### **The Divine Mysteries.**

Gregory of Nyssa Paul examined ... the unclear and hidden aspects of the divine mysteries and through suggestive phrases revealed the illuminations which came to him from God concerning the understanding of what is incomprehensible and unsearchable. On Perfection.45

#### **Struck with Awe.**

Chrysostom: After going back to former times and looking back to God's original dispensation of things, whereby the world has existed up to the present time, and having considered the special provision which he had made for all eventualities, Paul is struck with awe and cries aloud, making his hearers feel confident that what he is saying will come to pass. Homilies on Romans 19.47

## **11:34 *Knowing the Mind of the Lord***

### **The Nature of Creatures.**

Origen: This refers to creatures, but the other members of the Trinity are excepted because they have nothing in common with the nature of creatures. Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.<sup>51</sup>

### **God's Wisdom Not Derived.**

Chrysostom: God does not get his wisdom from anyone else but is himself the fountain of all good things.<sup>53</sup> Homilies on Romans 19.<sup>54</sup>

## **11:35 *God Cannot Be Repaid***

### **God Devised All Things.**

Chrysostom: God himself devised all things, created all things and worked all things together. He is rich and had no need to receive anything from anyone else. Homilies on Romans 19.<sup>57</sup>

## **11:36 *All Things are from God***

### **The Father from Whom and the Son Through Whom and the Spirit to Whom.**

Origen: You see how here, [as in the previous verses,] Paul indicates the mystery of the Trinity. For when he says from him and through him and to him, this corresponds to the one God and Father, from whom are all things, and our one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things. <sup>60</sup> Likewise he says that all things are revealed by the Spirit of God, thus indicating that the providence of the Trinity is present in everything. When he talks about the height of riches he means the Father, from whom all things come; when he talks about the height of wisdom he means Christ, who is the wisdom of God; and when he talks about the depth of knowledge he is referring to the Holy Spirit, who knows the deep things of God.

Paul adds "forever" to indicate that the perfection of all things is not bound by time but will extend to eternity and even be increased. He further adds "Amen" so that we might understand that we are coming to that blessedness through him, of whom it is written in the Apocalypse: "These are the words of the Amen." <sup>61</sup> Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.<sup>62</sup>

Origen: Paul declares that God is the beginning of the substance of all things by the words "of him" and the bond of their subsistence by the expression "through him" and their final end by the term "to him." <sup>63</sup> Against Celsus 6.<sup>65</sup><sup>64</sup>

Gregory of Nyssa: What person who believes that he lives "from him and through him and to him" will dare to make the One who encompasses in himself the life of each of us a witness of a life which does not reflect him? On Perfection.<sup>66</sup>

**Beginning, Continuing and Consummating Providence.**

Ambrose: "From him" means the beginning and origin of the substance of the universe, i.e., by his will and power.... "Through him" means the continuation of the universe; "unto him" means its end. Six Days of Creation 5.19.67

**The Saving Work of the Triune God.**

Augustine: Paul is referring to the Trinity when he says this. Faith and the Creed 16.69

**In Him Are All Things.**

John of Damascus: "In him are all things" not only because he has brought them from nothing into being but because it is by his operation that all things he made are kept in existence and held together. Living things, however, participate more abundantly, because they participate in the good both by their being and by their living. But rational beings, while they participate in the good in the aforementioned ways, do so still more by their very rationality. For in a way they are more akin to him, although of course he is immeasurably superior to them. Orthodox Faith 4.13.74