

# Romans 11:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

## Analysis

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Paul quotes Isaiah 40:13 (LXX): **For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?** (tis gar egnō noun kyriou, ē tis symboulos autou egeneto, τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου ἢ τίς σύμβουλος αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο). The rhetorical questions expect the answer: no one. The mind (nous, νοῦς) of the Lord refers to His thoughts, plans, intentions. No human has known (egnō, ἔγνω, perfect tense—comprehended fully) God's mind.

The second question: **who hath been his counsellor?** (symboulos, σύμβουλος, "adviser"). No one advises God or informs His decisions. This undercuts human pride: we neither understand God exhaustively nor contribute to His wisdom. Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 included mysteries beyond full human grasp—election, hardening, Israel's future. Isaiah 40:13 humbles the theologian: God's ways are higher (Isaiah 55:8-9). We receive revelation gratefully but acknowledge limits.

## Historical Context

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Isaiah 40 emphasizes God's incomparability and sovereignty over nations. Paul applies this to soteriology: God's plan to save Jew and Gentile reflects wisdom that no human could devise or critique. The doxology answers potential objections: 'But why did God do it this way?' Answer: Who are you to question?

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How does acknowledging that no one 'knows the mind of the Lord' create humility in theological discussion?
2. What is the difference between knowing *about* God (revelation) and knowing God's mind fully (impossible)?
3. Why is it spiritually dangerous to act as God's 'counsellor' by presuming to correct His revealed plans?

## Interlinear Text

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τίς	γὰρ	ἔγνω	νοῦν	κυρίου	ἢ	τίς	σύμβουλος
who	For	hath known	the mind	of the Lord	or	who	his counsellor
G5101	G1063	G1097	G3563	G2962	G2228	G5101	G4825

  

αὐτοῦ	ἐγένετο
G846	hath been
	G1096

## Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 40:13** (References Lord): Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him?

**1 Corinthians 2:16** (References Lord): For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

**Job 15:8** (Parallel theme): Hast thou heard the secret of God? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?

**Job 36:22** (Parallel theme): Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him?

**Jeremiah 23:18** (References Lord): For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard it?

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