



Romans

God the potter 9:14-24

- Review
 - The Israelites were expecting blessings promised to them from the Abrahamic covenant.
 - They are wondering where these blessings are
 - Didn't the Word of God fail since the Israelites are not now in possession of their Messiah (Christ) & all the associated promised blessings? (verse 6)
 - The bottom line answer "Categorically NO!"
 - God chose some from national Israel to be part of spiritual Israel. (verse 11)
 - This choosing was not based on works but on God who calls
 - The natural response of the Jews is, this isn't fair! (verse 14)
 - God in His sovereign freedom is totally free to do what he wants
 - Example of Moses and Pharaoh (verses 15-18)
 - Example of a potter and the clay (verses 20-21)
 - God does what He wants so He is glorified (verses 22-23)



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- Is there injustice/unrighteousness with God? (verse 14)
 - Because God is operating this way (in His sovereignty) doesn't this make Him unjust?
 - This goes directly against the character of God
 - Deut. 32:1-4, Job 8:3, Psalm 92:15 & 145:17
 - May it never be/God forbid
 - Also used in Rom. 3:31, 6:2 & 15, 7:7 & 13
 - Expression strongly denies a false conclusion
- God has mercy on whom He wants and hardens whom He wants (verse 15-18) – Exodus 33:18-23
 - I will have mercy – I will have compassion (future, active, indicative)
 - On whom I have mercy – on whom I have compassion (present, active, subjunctive)
 - The second usage of each word shows the outward manifestation because of the determination of the inward decision – God determined to not give people what they deserve, mercy, and puts that decision into action. And the same with compassion.
 - “I will have mercy [compassion] on anyone, whoever he is, that I will show mercy [compassion] to in future” Wuest
 - This is bringing out the sovereignty of God



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- Because all this rests on the sovereignty of God, His decision and action is not dependent on man's actions but God's choice (verse 16 & 11)
 - Human effort is not the source of God's mercy and compassion
 - God's sovereignty is shown with Moses and Pharaoh
- God's sovereignty with Pharaoh (verses 17-18)
 - God raised him up/hardened his heart (Exodus 14)
 - To demonstrate His power in him
 - To proclaim His name throughout all the earth
- For this purposes I raised you up to demonstrate
 - The idea is, God brought Pharaoh forward on the event stage to demonstrate His power, and that the name of the Lord would be proclaimed throughout the whole earth – Exodus 14:10-31
- Hardened heart
 - Three words in the Hebrew are used to describe the hardness of Pharaoh's heart
 - One used the most, literally means to be or become strong and figuratively to be strong in will. To be fixed in will. (handout by Hal)



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- Vincent says, “In Exodus the hardening is represented as *self-produced* (8:15, 32; 9:34), and as *produced by God*, (4:21; 7:3, 9:12; 10:20, 27; 11:10). Paul here chooses the latter representation.”
- Facts:
 - God did not force Pharaoh to resist Him
 - God does not cause mankind to do evil
 - The sin of mankind comes from the sin nature
 - Pharaoh’s rebellion against God came because of His depravity, not because of God
 - When God demanded Pharaoh to release the Israelites it enraged Pharaoh’s already hardened heart – this is the sense in which God hardened his heart – He hardened his heart by putting a demand on his already hard heart that he would not want to meet
 - Pharaoh was, in a sense, already beyond help and God in His sovereignty chose to use him to proclaim His name throughout the whole earth



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- Why does He still find fault? Who can resist His will? (verse 19)
 - If God determines salvation for someone how can they resist?
 - If God determines damnation for someone how can they resist?
 - Who can resist God?
 - If God is sovereignly in control of everything how can He find fault with people?
 - If God determines something who can withstand it?
 - Jews are thinking if God determined Pharaoh's heart to be hardened He must have already decided that they would not be part of spiritual Israel. It's not our fault; we have no choice in the matter.
 - The difficulty is understanding the sovereignty of God
 - On the contrary, who are you to question God (verse 20-21)
 - "O man who answers back to God"
 - Little man, who are you to challenge the almighty God on what He does or how He does it.
 - God can do what He wants making from the same lump of clay some vessels for honor and some for dishonor
 - God in his sovereignty made Moses a vessel of honor and Pharaoh a vessel of dishonor
 - God's purpose is similar with both men.
 - With Moses he shared glory and made His known
 - With Pharaoh he declared His name throughout the whole earth



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- Goes from the specific, Moses & Pharaoh, to the more general (verses 22-24)
 - What if God – the supreme all powerful God (verse 22)
 - Willing to publicly show His wrath
 - To make His power known
 - Deals with people with much patience
 - Vessels of wrath/vessels of dishonor not because of God but because of their own sin nature
 - Fitted/prepared for destruction – this happened because of Chapter 2:2-4, “despise the goodness and forbearance and longsuffering of God”
 - He did this so that those whom He would show His honor to are those whom He chose as vessels of mercy (verse 23)
 - Romans 9:29 – ‘except the Lord of Sabbath had left to us a posterity, We would have become as Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah.’
 - When talking of vessels of wrath only his wrath and power are brought out
 - When talked of vessels of mercy God’s love and glory are brought out Eph. 2:4-7
 - God’s love for all people - Ezek. 33:11
 - These chosen for honorable use came not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles.



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- Summary points – by Hal Malloy
 - God’s plan for Israel (as well as the Gentiles) for being vessels of honor & mercy is compatible with God’s entire essence (sovereignty, mercy, justice & righteousness) and is also compatible with human responsibility & volition
 - The purpose of the context is not to discuss the doctrine of predestination as it applies to salvation but to establish the sovereignty of God in His plan for Israel (as well as the Gentiles).
 - An understanding of God’s plan and dealings with Israel is necessary in the understanding of God’s preservation of a remnant.