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Class Notes

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## **Vessels of Wrath, Vessels of Mercy, Both Jews and Gentiles**

### **Romans 9:19-26**

#### I. The Next Objection Raised and Rebuked

***Romans 9:19-21 One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?" 20 But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" 21 Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?***

Q: What is the objection Paul raises here in verse 19?

Q: What are the underlying assumptions of that objection?

Q: What human attitude does this passage rebuke? Why is it vital for us to be humble when probing this doctrine?

Q: What are the "potter's rights" here? How are they relevant to human salvation and condemnation?

Q: What is the significance of the phrase "same lump of clay"? How does it humble the elect?

Q: In another translation, verse 21 speaks of vessels of honor and of "no honor" or "dishonor". What does that teach you about the elect and the non-elect (reprobate)?

#### II. The Potter's Rights

***Romans 9:22-23 What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath-- prepared for destruction? 23 What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory***

Q: Why do you think Paul couches his questions in the “what if” pattern?  
It’s an unfinished question. What do you think he means in his mind concerning the unwritten part of the question?

Q: What does verse 22 call the reprobate, or (verse 21) “vessels of dishonor”?

Q: According to verse 22, what is the God’s purpose in creating and sustaining the reprobate?

Q: What is the significance of the display/make known language in verses 22-23? Why is it important for God to put himself (his nature and his works) on display?

Q: What attributes of God are on display in the reprobate?

Q: Who is the audience of that display?

Q: Are God’s purposes in and through the wicked on full display here on earth, or is there more to learn beyond this present age? In other words, **when** is the fullest display of God’s patience, wrath, and power in the lives of the wicked?

Q: How does this passage from Job shed light on the fullest display of God’s wrath in the lives of the wicked?

*Job 21:7-13 Why do the wicked live on, growing old and increasing in power? <sup>8</sup> They see their children established around them, their offspring before their eyes. <sup>9</sup> Their homes are safe and free from fear; the rod of God is not upon them. <sup>10</sup> Their bulls never fail to breed; their cows calve and do not miscarry. <sup>11</sup> They send forth their children as a flock; their little ones dance about. <sup>12</sup> They sing to the music of tambourine and harp; they make merry to the sound of the flute. <sup>13</sup> They spend their years in prosperity and go down to the grave in peace.*

Q: How does God display great patience in the lives of the wicked? How does he display power? How does he display wrath?

Note: Lessons from my book, *The Glory Now Revealed: “Memories of the Damned”*

Q: What attributes of God are on display in the elect, as stated in verse 23?

Q: How are the elect humbled by God’s punishment of the wicked?

Q: What are the riches of God’s glory in verse 23?

Q: How are the wicked prepared for destruction?

*James 5:5 You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.*

*Romans 2:5-6 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. <sup>6</sup> God "will give to each person according to what he has done."*

Q: How does God prepare the elect in advance for glory?

*2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*

III. All the Elect (Jews and Gentiles) Are Called by God from Being Outsiders to Insiders

*Romans 9:24-26 ... even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? <sup>25</sup> As he says in Hosea: "I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one," <sup>26</sup> and, "It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"*

Q: Why does Paul emphasize here that the vessels of mercy are called by God from both Jews and Gentiles?

Q: How do the two quotes from Hosea enhance the mercy and grace of God in all the elect?

**Background from Hosea:** Hosea the prophet was commanded by God to marry Gomer, a prostitute, as a picture of God's tragic love relationship with Israel. Just as she was constantly wandering after other men, so Israel was constantly wandering after other gods into sin. Part of Hosea's pain was "their" children. Gomer bore him (Hosea) a son, and God told him to name him Jezreel. But then Gomer got pregnant again, and had a daughter. The different phraseology implies that Hosea was not her father. God told him to name her "Not loved." Then Gomer had another son, again it seems Hosea was not the father of this one either. God told him to name the boy "Not my people" (simply, "Not mine.") How painful!!

But then God shows amazing grace to wicked, wandering Israel, by being willing to take her back:

*Hosea 2:23 I will show my love to the one I called 'Not my loved one. 'I will say to those called 'Not my people, 'You are my people'; and they will say, 'You are my God.'"*

***Hosea 1:10 Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.'***

Q: How do these verses help us understand Paul's message of vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath?

Q: How are they both humbling and encouraging to Christians?