

Eternity Daily Bible Study

Romans 9-16 The Implications of Salvation

Number: 591

Verses: Romans 9:19-26

Topic: God The Potter

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Romans 9:19-26 MKJV *You will then say to me, Why does He yet find fault? For who has resisted His will? (20) No, but, O man, who are you who replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him who formed it, Why have you made me this way? (21) Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel to honor and another to dishonor? (22) What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; (23) and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He had before prepared to glory; (24) whom He also called, not only us, of Jews, but also of the nations? (25) As He also says in Hosea, "I will call those not My people, My people; and those not beloved, Beloved." (26) And it shall be, in the place where it was said to them. "You are not My people; there they shall be called sons of the living God."*

This is a very controversial passage. Again I will give my understanding of it, aware that some may yet disagree (hopefully in love)! The basics are:

1. God is depicted as a Potter fashioning vessels.
2. They are fashioned "out of the same lump of clay".
3. Some become vessels of honor
4. Others become vessels of dishonor
5. Some are "fitted to destruction"
6. Others are "vessels of mercy.... before prepared for glory"
7. This will result in both Jews and Gentiles being saved

The depiction of God as a Potter depicts Him as Creator and as Creator having an irresistible right to make us any way that He wants. Who we "turn out to be" is God's decision! It is the same clay in both cases. The same human nature, the same "stuff". Scripture constantly asserts that God can do anything with anyone, and even takes small insignificant people and uses them to overthrow the mighty and the powerful.

God's absolute sovereignty as Creator means that we are never "self-made men" nor are we "made by the system" and we certainly are not determined by our economic class, educational level or cultural attainments. God can choose someone out of a world gone insane (like Noah) or a city filled with idols (like Abraham) or even the most stubborn, narrow-minded, hateful and angry zealot (like Paul) and make a great man or woman of God out of them!

Because God decided how people turn out we can never look at a person and say "they will never amount to anything!". For that is reckoning without God! Now this is precisely what the Jews had thought about the Gentiles. They saw themselves as God's friends,

and God's chosen ones and the recipients of His revelation and intervention. The Gentiles were viewed as immoral, unenlightened demon-worshiping pagans who had no hope and no promise.

Paul then upsets the apple-cart by asserting that:

1. Jews and Gentiles were made from the same lump of clay (the clay that Adam was formed from).
2. That God a perfect right to have mercy on the Gentiles if He wanted to make them into vessels of honor. God can make even the Gentiles turn out OK.
3. That God was not obligated to save anyone, no matter how much the Jews thought of themselves, and could make them into vessels of dishonor if he so chose to. No one is so good that they have a hammer lock on salvation.
4. We have no right to protest against what God does because He is the Creator and we are just His creation.

What this does is to snap any connection between our works and our salvation. Paul says "No one is so bad that God cannot save them, nor is anyone so naturally virtuous that they have a "right to salvation" and so cannot end up in Hell." The gangster can end up going to Heaven and the choir-boy can end up going to Hell. When God decides to have mercy on someone and to prepare them for glory (even if they are far from the Lord at the moment) – then they will turn out OK. People who are not God's people, can become God's people! (verses 24-26 above).

This leads naturally to the question. If our salvation has nothing to do with us, and everything to do with God, then how can God blame anyone for not being saved?

You will then say to me, Why does He yet find fault? For who has resisted His will? (20) No, but, O man, who are you who replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him who formed it, Why have you made me this way?

We cannot "reply against God" and complain about the way we are made. It may not seem fair, but God has a perfect right to make any person any way that He so desires. This is very hard for us to take. I am very glad that God chose me to be a "vessel of mercy" and that His loving purposes have surrounded my life. Others, like Judas Iscariot, were not so fortunate.

Why are some vessels "fitted for destruction" , those like Judas who was a "son of perdition" and not even three years with Jesus could save his soul? This is a great mystery! God has a "remnant" of humanity that are saved – and we will learn more about this remnant as we go further into this chapter.

I believe that prayer has a lot to do with who is saved! Revivals – when many get saved and whole cities find Christ come in answer to prevailing prayer. And Paul prays for the lost (Romans 10:1), and tells Timothy to do the same (1 Timothy 2:1-6), so perhaps the issue of who gets saved is "God's business" but God's business can be influenced by prayer. I certainly believe that my own salvation was brought about by the prayers of a neighbor and of some Christian friends at university.

The question of destiny is God's business alone. Race, culture, ability and intelligence have nothing to do with it. We cannot batter our way into heaven by sheer willpower or

even stay out of heaven by going wild (but that is no license to sin!). What matters is what the Potter chooses to make out of the clay. But the Potter is not some cold, distant Being, rather He is a God of love who can be appealed to by prayer. From Abraham to Jabez to Moses prevailing prayer has influenced human destiny! People that God wanted to destroy in His wrath were spared. And those born into pain (like Jabez) became mighty and strong.

The only way to change your life is by asking the Potter to make you a better person. You cannot make yourself. You cannot construct yourself. In fact you don't even know here to start!

You need to ask God for mercy! When God changes your destiny, then your work will pay off. But unless God has mercy, you will simply get nowhere. Put away your pride and ask God for grace in every area of your life!

The testimony of Scripture is that God hears every cry for mercy and that "all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13). But that salvation is not their doing or deserving, rather it is from the Potter's merciful hand.

Blessings,

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