

How do we understand Romans 9:22, "vessels of wrath prepared for destruction"?

Scripture: Romans 9:21–23

Code: QA183

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Question:

The Bible speaks of vessels of mercy and vessels of destruction, which God specifically made for His purpose (Romans 9:21-23). Does that mean people like Judas were made by God for destruction?

John:

That's a very provocative question and of course you get ultimately into whole area of God's sovereignty, but let me show you something most interesting about Romans 9:21.

Paul is saying here that God is sovereign. Paul is clearly saying that, there is no other message here. Verse 18, "He has mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardens." The argument comes, "Well it doesn't seem fair," and in verse 21 Paul says, "Hath not the potter power over the clay; of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?" The potter can make a vessel any way he wants. He's the potter and the vessel is simply clay.

But I want you to notice what happens in verse twenty-two. "What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory,"

Now I don't want to get too deep and I just want to give you one or two thoughts. Notice, there are *vessels of wrath*, at the end of verse 22, *fitted to destruction*. In verse 23, *vessels of mercy which He had prepared to glory*. Now in the Greek you have two serious distinctions here in the Greek tense and you must recognize them. I should say in the Greek voice which is similar to English. You realize the difference between active and passive? In active, the subject does the acting and in passive the subject receives the action. Now notice, verse 22 *is a passive, vessels of wrath fitted to destruction*. God is not the subject. The verb is passive. Verse 23, *vessels of mercy which He had prepared to glory*. God, there, is the subject and the verb is active.

Listen, God says *I prepare* vessels for glory, but *vessels are prepared* for destruction. And what is happening there in the Greek tense, is God is taking one step away from the responsibility of preparing a person from His creative act for hell. God doesn't take that responsibility. He says there are vessels that have been prepared for destruction. And if you study the Bible very carefully you will see that every where in Scripture the responsibility for such preparation lies right in the very heart of the man who goes to hell. Is that right? Jesus said, "You will not come to me, that you might have life." At the end of the Book of Revelation He says, "Come, and let him that is athirst come." And so God says, I fit for glory, but vessels are fitted for destruction. Judas was not created by God to

occupy hell.

Another reason I know that is that hell was never even made for human beings. It was made for the devil and his angels. Judas went there because Judas chose to betray Christ, chose to reject the truth, chose to pay a sad, sad price.

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