

Romans Session 142

Israel's Unbelief Is Consistent With God's Person 4

Romans 9:22-24 (KJV)

²² *What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering 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 afore prepared unto glory,*

²⁴ *Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?*

In these verses Paul gives two reasons, although not a complete explanation of, God's allowing sin to enter and contaminate His Universe.

We have looked at the first one;

Paul says, God determined to allow sin in His creation because it gave Him the opportunity **to demonstrate His Wrath. Why?** Because God is glorified not only in His mercy, but also in His Wrath.

His Grace is not the only way He demonstrates His nature and character, but also through His Wrath.

So even God's anger, vengeance, and retribution poured out on sinners are glorious, because they display His majestic holiness.

This time we want to see the second reason God allowed sin to enter His Creation. And that reason was to show His Power. To make His Power known.

His power is manifested in His judgment and punishment of sin.

The vivid and sobering events found in the closing chapter of Revelation depict God's ultimate judgmental wrath.

The plagues, the fiery judgment, and all the other curses of the apocalypse leave no doubt that the Lord will judge and remove all sin and sinners from the earth before He establishes his millennial kingdom.

When Christ comes from heaven in His blood-stained garments, riding on a white horse and carrying a sword, He will defeat antichrist and all his ungodly followers.

God's **power**, originally displayed in creation, will be equally glorious in destruction.

It will be awesomely manifested in His vengeful, but wholly righteous and justified, conquest of all enemies who would attempt to conquer Him.

God has every right to act gloriously in such judgment, but He has, by His mercy **endured with much patience** a world of sinners.

He has **endured** their unbelief, rejections, hatred, blasphemy, and iniquity, while patiently allowing time for repentance.

Psalm 103:8 (KJV)

⁸ *The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.*

2 Peter 3:9 (KJV)

⁹ *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

Vessels of wrath prepared for destruction is surely one of the most tragic identifications of unbelievers in all of Scripture.

Paul of course is speaking of ungodly and unrepentant human **vessels**, all of whom will feel the ultimate **wrath** of God, for which they have been **prepared for destruction** by their own rejection of Him.

As already noted, it is not that God makes men sinful but that He leaves them in their sin unless they repent of it and turn to His Son for deliverance.

The Greek verb rendered **prepared** is passive. God is not the subject doing the preparing.

There is a very clear sense in this use of the passive voice to relieve God of the responsibility and to put it fully on the shoulders of those who refuse to heed His word and believe on His Son.

They are prepared by their own rejection for a place (hell) prepared by God, not originally for them but;

Matthew 25:41b (KJV)

⁴¹ *prepared for the devil and his angels:*

The corollary of that sobering truth regarding unbelievers is the comforting truth regarding believers that He did so in order

²³ *that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,*

²⁴ *Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?*

God allowed sin to enter the world not only to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known but also to demonstrate **the riches of His glory** by bestowing His grace **upon vessels of mercy**.

Ephesians 2:6-7 (KJV)

⁶ *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*

⁷ *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*

These are the people **which He prepared beforehand for glory**.

In this instance the Greek verb rendered prepared is in the active voice, and the subject doing the actions is specifically God (**He**).

The great work God did in saving the elect puts His glory on display before all angels and all men.

Revelation 5:9-14 (KJV)

⁹ *And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;*

¹⁰ *And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.*

¹¹ *And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;*

¹² *Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*

¹³ *And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne,*

and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

¹⁴ And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

He has the absolute right to reveal and demonstrate His character in any what He chooses, whether by His just condemnations of the unbelievers or by His gracious redemption of believers.

Scripture makes clear that no person is saved apart from faith in Christ, because God sovereignly requires that human response to His grace.

But the primary purpose of salvation is not the benefit it brings to those who are saved but rather the honor it brings to the God who saves them, by making **known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy.**

Believers are saved without any merit or work of their own, in order that God may have a means of displaying **His Glory**, which is seen in the grace, the mercy, the compassion, and the forgiveness that He alone grants to those who come to Christ.

Now Paul closes this passage by identifying **us**, that is, himself and all other believers as God's preordained **vessels of mercy.**

Every believer is among those **whom He also called, not from among, Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.** That is the glorious truth of the universal offer of God's grace.

The unfathomable truth that God chooses some men for salvation and others for destructions is not revealed to confuse us or upset us, and certainly not to tempt us to question the character of God's person.

The truth is given to demonstrate God's glory and sovereignty to all men.

It is also given to make believers thankful that He has chosen us, who, in ourselves, were not and are not more worthy of salvation than those who remain lost.

In showing mercy and judging sin, God makes no distinctions based on race, ethnic background, nationality, intelligence, or even moral or religious merit.

He distinguishes only between those whom he has chosen and those whom He has not.

And that is a hard truth to accept, because it runs directly counter to man's natural inclinations and standards.

To the natural man it seems grossly unfair, and even the best taught and most faithful believer cannot fully explain it. But the truth is fully biblical and is among the truths taught by Paul that Peter says are "hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scripture, to their own destruction

2 Peter 3:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

For those who receive God's Word as inerrant, there will always be a tension between fully acknowledging God's sovereign will and fully acknowledging His requirement of human faith.

We can only believe what Scripture teaches accepting in our hearts what we cannot explain with our minds.

And although Scripture makes clear that God elects and rejects solely based on His divine sovereignty, it makes equally clear that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

Ezekiel 18:32 (NASB)

³² **"For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord GOD. "Therefore, repent and live."**

He has no desire that even one person should perish;

2 Peter 3:9 (NASB)

⁹ **The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.**

Without compromising either His holiness or His justice, Jesus assures us that;

John 6:37 (NASB)

³⁷ **"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.**

Revelation 15:3-4 (NASB)

³ **And they *sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!**

⁴ **"Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU, FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED."**

ISRAEL'S UNBELIEF IS CONSISTENT WITH HIS PROPHETIC REVELATIONS AND HIS PREREQUISITE OF FAITH 1

Romans 9:25-33 (NASB)

²⁵ **As He says also in Hosea, "I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'"**

²⁶ **"AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD."**

²⁷ **Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED;**

²⁸ **FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY."**

²⁹ **And just as Isaiah foretold, "UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOth HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH."**

³⁰ **What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith;**

³¹ **but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law.**

³² **Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,**

³³ **just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."**

Continuing his argument that Israel's unbelief is not inconsistent with God's promised covenant of redemption, Paul proceeds to give two more features from the Old Testament that support divine integrity.

He confirms the truth that Israel's unbelief is perfectly consistent with God's revelation through Old Testament prophets. And he confirms that Israel's unbelief is consistent with God's eternal prerequisite of faith on the part of those He saves.