

The Book of Romans

The Gospel of God

Perceived Tension:

God's sovereignty over all things
and
 Man's responsibility for his free choices

¹⁹ You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"

²⁰ On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?

²¹ Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

²² What if God, willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,

²³ And *He did so* to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory?

(Romans 9:19-23)

Romans 9-11

Israel's Unbelief: The Word of God has not Failed

The Potter and the Clay

1. The Objection

- if God unconditionally hardens whomever He wills, then He cannot judge those who disobey Him, for no one can resist His will
- assumes that unless people have the power of self-determination over against God, they cannot be held responsible for their sin

The Potter and the Clay

2. Paul's Response

- what he did *not* say:
 - he did *not* answer by saying that man's will, not God's will, is determinative
 - he did *not* offer a "logical" resolution to the tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility

The Potter and the Clay

➤ Compatibilism Defined (*D.A. Carson*)

- 1) God is absolutely sovereign, but His sovereignty never functions in such a way that human responsibility is curtailed, minimized or mitigated.
- 2) Human beings are morally responsible creatures—they significantly choose, rebel, obey, believe, defy, make decisions, and so forth, and they are rightly held accountable for such actions; but this characteristic never functions so as to make God absolutely contingent.

The Potter and the Clay

2. Paul's Response

- he rebukes the attitude of the creature presuming to judge the ways of the Creator
- he asserts that the sole authority and freedom for determining what sorts of vessels it is right to make belongs to God as Creator

The Potter and the Clay

➤ Application of the Analogy

- God's right and freedom to make from the mass of fallen humanity some persons for salvation and others for wrath and condemnation