

Called to be Vessels of Mercy
Romans 9:19-24

Q: Why does God find fault with those whom He hardens? 19

Some likely still question God's justice.
Is selective mercy and hardening of people fair?
Why blame people for what God does to them?



A: Bad question, God's focus is His glory on vessels of mercy. 20-24

*Note what isn't said. Plus no solution is offered for the tension between God's sovereignty & our responsibility/will, just sharp rhetorical questions.
*To confront such "talking back to God," Paul turns to OT imagery found in Isa. 29:16, 45:9,10, 64:8, Jer. 18:1-10.

*Paul illustrates his point through two vessels—of wrath and mercy.

- 1) vessels of wrath: One can't object if God has patiently put up with vessels prepared/fitted for destruction, when God's very purpose is to reveal His wrath and power through their rebelliousness. Case in point = Pharaoh, see 17,18, Ex. 5:2, 8:15, and recall 2:4,5.
- 2) vessels of mercy: God's wrath and power upon vessels of wrath work to further enhance the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy (to Israel through Pharaoh and through Israel to us, 11:11,12). *Prepared beforehand* recalls 8:28-30, as does the *called*.

Bottom line: It is God's right as creator to choose not only to be merciful to some sinners, but also to choose which ones.

What are some common objections people make to Paul's words?

What really should be our response to Paul's words here?