

Romans 9:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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:

Analysis

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—the Greek syntax suggests a suppressed conclusion: 'What if God...what then? Can you object?' Paul describes *skeuē orgēs* (σκεύη ὀργῆς, 'vessels of wrath')—humans designated for divine judgment. The phrase *katērtismena eis apōleian* (κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν) is passive/middle: 'fitted/prepared for destruction.' The agent is ambiguous—did God fit them, or did they fit themselves?

The contrast with verse 23 suggests both: God prepared mercy-vessels (*proētoimasen*, προητοίμασεν, clearly divine action), but wrath-vessels are 'fitted' (possibly reflexive). Yet God's *thelōn* (θέλων, 'willing/desiring') to display wrath shows sovereign purpose even in judgment. His *makrothumia* (μακροθυμία, 'longsuffering') delays judgment (2 Peter 3:9), giving space for repentance, yet the end is destruction. God's patience with the wicked serves to display mercy to the elect and ultimately magnify justice in final judgment.

Historical Context

The 'vessels of wrath' include both hardened Israel (11:7-10) and all unbelievers. God's longsuffering was evident in delaying judgment on Israel for 40 years after Christ's rejection (AD 30-70) and in patiently enduring wicked nations throughout history before final judgment.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does God's 'longsuffering' (delay of judgment) serve both mercy (giving time for repentance) and justice (storing up wrath)?
2. What does the passive 'fitted to destruction' suggest about the interplay of divine sovereignty and human rebellion?
3. Why does God display wrath and power—what purpose does judgment serve in his overall plan?

Interlinear Text

εἰ	δὲ	θέλων	ὁ	θεὸς	ἐνδείξασθαι	τὴν	ὀργῆς	καὶ
What if	G1161	willing	G3588	God	to shew	G3588	his wrath	and
G1487		G2309		G2316	G1731		G3709	G2532
γνωρίσαι	τὸ	δυνατὸν	αὐτοῦ	ἤνεγκεν	ἐν	πολλῇ		
known	G3588	power	G846	endured	with	much		
G1107		G1415		G5342	G1722	G4183		
μακροθυμία	σκεύη	ὀργῆς	κατηρτισμένα	εἰς	ἀπώλειαν			
longsuffering	the vessels	his wrath	fitted	to	destruction			
G3115	G4632	G3709	G2675	G1519	G684			

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 16:4 (Parallel theme): The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

Jude 1:4 (References God): For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 9:21 (Parallel theme): Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

1 Peter 2:8 (Parallel theme): And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

2 Timothy 2:20 (Parallel theme): But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

Exodus 9:16 (Parallel theme): And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

Romans 9:17 (Parallel theme): For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

1 Thessalonians 2:16 (Judgment): Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

Psalms 90:11 (Judgment): Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.

2 Peter 2:3 (Judgment): And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.