

Title: “Paul Explained the Problem with Evil”

Introduction: Paul has gone through a painful transition. He had done all he could to reach the Jews with the Gospel, but they had strangely rejected it from him who was also a Jew. So Paul transitioned his ministry towards the Gentiles. This might be referred to as the first cross-cultural ministry. This is where the phrase came from, robbing Peter to pay Paul, as Peter also saw the message rejected by the Gentiles, so Peter turned to giving the message to the Jews which received it. Here though, Paul was arguing for the righteousness of God. There is suffering in the world today because of man’s sin not because of God’s unrighteousness. Paul had argued that God allowed Pharaoh so that untimely God would get the glory. Paul also used the clay and the potter as an example of God being in control of the affairs of mankind. He interestingly as God extended grace to the Jews He also did to the Gentiles.

Propositional Question: God’s people all see how Paul had suffered for the Gospel, and as Christians ought we not also be willing to suffer for the name of Jesus Christ?

Text: Romans 9:14-24 “What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. 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. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? 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: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?”

CONTEXT:

Who: The Apostle Paul was the human author of the book of Romans.

What: Paul dealt with the cause of evil and the righteousness of God.

Where: Paul wrote the book in Corinth.

When: The epistle of Romans was written in 58 AD.

How: Paul was an apologist for God’s righteousness used the Old Testament to make his case.

INTERPRETATION:

Key theme: Paul's argues that suffering does not negate the righteousness of God.

Key words: Unrighteousness, God Forbid, Compassion, Mercy, Potter, Clay, Gentiles.

Summary of the text: Paul begins this passage with strong words defending the righteousness of God. Paul references Moses in the Old Testament as proof texts. Paul argues that even a tyrant like Pharaoh God still got the glory from the Israelites escape from Egypt. Paul very appropriately uses the metaphor of a potter and the clay to say that God is in control of our lives. Paul finishes this passage by declaring God's mercy extends to the Jews and the gentiles.

Summary of the passage: Paul spoke throughout this passage about the divine characteristics of God that all lead to the goodness of God to all of humanity. The fact that evil happens does not catch God off guard. The amazing thing is that God gets the glory whether good or evil happens. Good ultimately prevails. God also demonstrates His goodness in that His grace and mercy extend to everyone. He has included the entire human race throughout all of history in His love.

Summary of the main verse: Romans 9:17 "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." The fact that Christians discuss how Moses and the Israelites escaped from Egypt, and passed through the Red Sea on dry ground demonstrates how much the Lord has been glorified throughout the millennia and the world.

APPLICATION:

Original audience: In Corinth, and the audience was to the Jews and the Gentiles.

To myself: When suffering happens remember that God is good, and suffering is temporary.

To family: When suffering or tragedy happens just try to be there for your family.

To church: The local church is hospital for the wounded, suffering, and down trodden.

To my job: The Christin's job gives the believer continual contact with the world so that when tragedy strikes the Christians can be there to encourage, bless and witness to their co-workers.

To society: As a Christian we see that effects of sin on our world, but we are the only ones that know what is wrong in our world, have the remedy for what is wrong, and the opportunity to change the world, if ever so little, by our being and apologist for Jesus Christ.