

# THE POTTER'S HAND

GBC EQUIPPING HOUR | SEPTEMBER 6, 2020

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## Introduction & Romans 9:1-5

PURPOSE: To be malleable to how God is masterfully shaping our faith even as we “work it out” (Philippians 2:12-13).

### I. Introduction

#### A. The Mystery of Faith

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own** salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who **works in you**, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

- Philippians 2:12-13

1. By way of affirmations, our faith in Christ **is** personally owned.
2. By way of denials, our faith in Christ **is not** autonomous.

#### B. Romans 9 - The Favorite Proof Text among Calvinists

1. *God's Sovereignty Compounded.* Read all of Romans 9 and you will see God as the ultimate cause for saving not just a single person (e.g., Jacob), but with that his saving whole people groups (Israel out of Pharaoh's clutches), and with that even subsets (“true Israel” -those who were circumcised in their hearts) within a larger people group (“Israel” proper). God even determines who will be the losers (Pharaoh) long before they make their villainous moves. And he causes each event in accordance with his central purpose.

2. *Where Arminians Go Wrong.* Trying to find a faith which is free of God as the supreme cause Arminians leapfrog major portions of Romans chapter 9 and make God play a role as a lesser cause –playing second fiddle to man’s ‘independent choice’ to have his faith. In this mindset man’s responsibility to believe, found in Romans chapter 10, overshadows God’s divine role found in Romans chapter 9 rather than the other way around.
3. *Where Calvinists Go Wrong.* The Apostle Paul didn’t write Romans chapter 9 so that the Calvinists could win a debate with the Arminians. Paul wrote Romans chapter 9 to showcase the power of the gospel, top-down-from-God, then penetratingly into-the-life-of-the-believer. Albeit Calvinists would readily concur with this, most would probably admit they haven’t spent a whole lot of time considering the shepherding, pastoral aspect of Romans 9.

## II. Romans 9:1-5

### A. A Little History on the Life of Paul

1. *Pre-Conversion.* Paul was a warrior Pharisee who wasn’t content to read and write Old Testament commentaries. Paul was more like a zealot. When he saw Christianity spreading, taking his Jewish people away from reliance on the Law of Moses, he sprang into action rounding up both men and women Christian converts into prison and stoning their teachers to death.
2. *After Conversion.* After Paul’s miraculous vision on the road to Damascus, he had to go through a massive paradigm shift whereby his former career would be regarded as rubbish. Now he would see Jesus Christ as supreme over Moses, and the

Law as the very thing pointing to the Gospel. But where did this leave Paul with his former patriots?

B. How Paul Showcases the Power of the Gospel

1. *Being Genuine and Honest about the Struggles in Becoming a New Christian Convert.* When you turn your life over to Christ, you don't just gain new friends (fellow brothers and sisters) you lose old friendships. But you can't be callous about it...

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—<sup>2</sup> that I have **great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.**  
<sup>3</sup> For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

- Romans 9:1-3

2. *Being Genuine and Honest about the Frustration of God Drawing the Dividing Line, Seemingly, All of the Sudden. But it wasn't "all of the sudden."* Throughout the Old Testament, which Paul knew, there are repeat accounts of God turning the tables after he was so many times rejected by his chosen people. "Nations" were prophesied to be included in God's redemptive plan going back to the time of Abraham. Paul's main shock has to do with the fact that the shift is happening in his lifetime and with -of *all* people- *himself* as the minister to these incoming Gentile converts.

**They are Israelites**, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.<sup>5</sup> To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

- Romans 9:4-5

3. *Romans 9:1-5 Isn't the First Time Paul Introduces the Gospel with Something Hugely Perplexing.*

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven **against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men**, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. <sup>19</sup> For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.

- Romans 1:18-19

What then? **Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all.** For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, <sup>10</sup> as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; <sup>11</sup> no one understands; no one seeks for God.

- Romans 3:9-11

#### THE RELIEF:

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, **we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

- Romans 5:1

#### **The Potter's Hand Course Outline (tentative):**

- September 6 - Introduction & Romans 9:1-5
- September 13 - God Establishing True Israel / Rom. 9:6-8
- September 20 - Literal Predestination / Rom. 9:9-13
- September 27 - Unaided Predestination / Rom. 9:14-18
- October 4 - Uncontested Predestination / Rom. 9:19-24
- October 11 - God Can Turn the Tables / Rom. 9:25-29
- October 18 - A God-Saturated Faith / Rom. 9:30-33
- October 25 - Conclusion