

# Romans 9:22-23

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/rom/rom-9/romans-922-23/>

*God is willing to retrofit those who choose to reject Him as vessels of destruction, just as He did when Pharaoh continued to reject Him. But God has created other vessels (believers) to demonstrate His glory through His mercy—to us who believe in His son.*

Paul now asks a rhetorical question: *What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?* (v 22). The expected answer to this rhetorical question is “And He did.” God did *endure with much patience*.

Paul follows this with an explanation why God did this, saying *And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory* (v 23).

In the Greek, the two words translated to English as *prepared* (the first in verse 22 and the second in 23) are two different words. The first *prepared* in the phrase *endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction* is the word “katartizo” which can also be translated as “mend” or “retrofit.”

This *prepared* “katartizo” is in the “middle voice” which means something acting upon itself. These are people that chose wrath. Paul was telling his audience that those vessels (or people) who reject God, will be like those in Romans 1 who incur God’s wrath when they are turned over by God to their own passions. We saw this progression of God’s wrath in Romans 1:

- Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity (Romans 1:24)
- For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions (Romans 1:26)
- And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind (Romans 1:28).

In each case, God “gave them over” to that which they desired.

They were then retrofitted *for destruction* by virtue of their choices.

Paul infers that God desires for these vessels to change, having great *patience*, but when they do not (just as Pharaoh did not), God will turn them over to destruction. God made a powerful example of Pharaoh by freeing the Israelites from him and destroying his army. And that was made possible by Pharaoh’s own choices to follow after his own hardened heart (Exodus 8:15, 32, 9:34). After Pharaoh hardened his heart, God hardened it further, that he might receive the full portion of his choice.

The second use of *prepared* in verse 23 translates the word “proetoimazo,” which means *prepared beforehand*. Here, Paul is discussing believers who were prepared by God, chosen for mercy and glory through faith in Jesus.

In verse 23 we see that God has prepared beforehand individuals for mercy and glory to make His glory known.

While God is willing to hand people who reject Him over to destruction, as Pharaoh experienced by the destruction of his army, He has also prepared believers to demonstrate His glory through His mercy to us: *And he did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory* (v 23).

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>22</sup> What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? <sup>23</sup> And *He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,***