

Rightly "Applying" God's Eternal Purpose

In Acts 13 and Romans 9, we find a common subject: the purpose of God. Consider how this purpose of God applies to us today. Of David it is stated in Acts 13:36 that, "...after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers ..."

While no one knows when time on earth will end, each of us will die (as David did) once our lives have served the purpose of God in our generation. Every human is a vessel in the hands of God. Depending upon whether your master is Jesus or Satan, you are a vessel of mercy or a vessel of wrath. We see both of these 'vessels' mentioned in Romans 9:21-24:

"Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?"

Some examples of each:

~ David was a vessel of mercy (Acts 9:22 – God...raised up David...of whom he testified...‘I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will’.”

~ Noah (Gen. 6:9) – “Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.”

~ Abraham (Gen. 18:19) – “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”

(Gen. 26:4-5) – “I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.”

On the other hand, King Saul was a vessel of wrath (for the opposite reason – see 1 Sam. 15:23, 26 – “Saul...rejected the word of the Lord”).

Here in Romans 9, the Pharaoh in Moses' day was a vessel of wrath; verse 17 reads, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you...” ~ Exod. 9:16

So also, King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel's day was a vessel of wrath (Dan. 4:17 — “...the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.”)

King Cyrus in Ezra's day was a vessel of wrath (Ezra 1:2 – "The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.")

As the Psalmist stated in Psa. 75:7 — "...it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another."

Which type of 'vessel' are we? The ONLY true way to answer that is to look at our lives in view of Christ's. His life was and is the ONLY life worthy of compelling another to live. Discipleship is not an option, but a requirement. True Christianity is NOT based upon personal faith or personal preferences! (As shown from the examples of Romans 9). We also see that success is not a true gauge of Divine approval, for Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, and Cyrus ALL prospered for long periods of time. Although they were used by God to fulfill His eternal purpose of creating a spiritual seed in Christ, they were vessels of WRATH! WILL THEY BENEFIT FROM GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE? What about us? Are we a vessel of MERCY or of WRATH as it relates to being a disciple and a Christian in the spreading of the gospel? How will God use us? Are we 'rightly applying' His eternal purpose to ourselves?

Some questions that may be asked in determining the answer:

Ø Are we living a life that we actively compel others to follow, or are we passive, keeping your faith to yourself, allowing others to 'find' what "works for them"?

Ø Do we eagerly desire Christ to return? [If not, why not?]

Therein lie the answers as to whether any changes need to be made in our lives.