

Bible Thoughts

with
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The Moulding of God in our lives

The thoughts and note material given on these pages are only a possible suggestion of the meaning, they must not be taken as inspired, however they are prayerfully prepared and compared with other similar material. There are many ways in which God's Word can be analyzed and none must be taken in place of the Word of God itself.

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Thoughts on the action by God in moulding our life.

The Moulding

Romans 9:14-24.

"14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

15 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.

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.

17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

20 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?

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

22 What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"

This passage appears to be an interruption in Paul's talk on Salvation. At first it would appear that God has favourite's, but that would make Him imperfect. Paul gives the answer in verse v14, he says that God is perfect because if God acted only on a single persons righteousness, none would be saved, why? Because there are none righteous, we all deserve condemnation, not mercy.

The whole Nation of Egypt was basically evil, it should have been punished, but God only punished the 3000 soldiers, so showing His grace and mercy.

Both Moses, a Jew and Pharaoh, a Gentile, were murderers, Moses by killing the Egyptian guard, see Exodus 2:11-15 and Pharaoh by his controlling the nation of Jews, see Exodus 1:8-19. Yet this very large nation was still subject to the control of God. In v17 we are told that God actually raised up Pharaoh for the glory of God.

To show His power.

God is Holy and must therefore punish sin, but He is also Loving and caring, so also desires to save all the people from their punishment for disobeying Him. If all the people were saved from their punishment then it would deny His Holiness and purity because it means He can accept sin. Equally, if all were punished and lost, it would deny His Love for His creation.

Therefore, whatever God does, it has to be right, because He is also righteous, guiltless, blameless.

The hardening of Pharaoh's heart.

Hardening a persons heart means to make any decisions they need to make even more against making the decision or turning more against the action. This hardening or stiffening action initially took place directly by Pharaoh, but eventually God took on the action of hardening the heart of Pharaoh. It is mentioned at least 15 times in the story found

in Exodus chapters 7 to 14. For example in Exodus 8:15,19,32 Pharaoh hardened his own heart, while in Exodus 9:12 and Exodus 10:1,20,27, God hardened the heart of Pharaoh following demonstrations of the power of God.

So by revealing His power God gave Pharaoh the opportunity to repent, but Pharaoh resisted this action by God and so God acted upon Pharaoh.

As the record of the events continues, ultimately Pharaoh appears to submit and let the Jews leave Egypt, yet he changes his mind and goes after them and sees his soldiers punished and wiped out. The result is that he and the Egyptian nation are humbled before God.

Note what Paul said in Romans 9:18.

"Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

The purpose of God and His plans.

God raised up Moses, then trained him in power and leadership as an Egyptian Prince, then humbled Moses as he was driven from his position of power and riches to become a humble shepherd. The position he remained in for many years because it was not until Moses was an old man of 80 that God took the next step and called him for the task he had been trained for, which was to take the Jewish nation into the Promised land.

"God has mercy on who He decides, God can see the future, he knows who will respond to Him. He can read their hearts."

God's Justice

This raises another problem, if God is sovereign who has the power to fight against Him? If you do then can God have the right to also judge you?

Let us imagine I am on the corner of the street giving out leaflets, most people will accept them from me, others will reject them, some may

even accept them then tear them up in front of me. However, there are some who will look at the message on the leaflet, some may even come back to talk about the content of the message.

No, I am offering this leaflet to you and the message on this leaflet said that for anyone who has this leaflet they can collect £100 at a certain local shop. This offer was a totally free gift, there were no conditions to collecting this money except you have to actually accept the offer in the shop. What would you do? You can chose to read and act upon the information, or totally reject the information, saying "I am not interested in accepting the gift." Whose fault is it if you fail to go to the shop and accept the offer?

Would I expect those people who had rejected the offer to come back later to complain because they had not taken up the offer?

Well God is making an offer of forgiveness for your sin, there are no conditions except you have to actually accept the offer, however, you are free to accept or reject the offer.

Romans 9:19-21. Therefore, by what right do you have to argue with God because you were not willing to accept His offer to change your life?

You see, God is the potter, we are the clay. When a potter takes a piece of clay he can change and shape that clay in to what he wants, if the clay fails to form the required shape, the potter can reject and perhaps start again. Of course the shaped clay could also fail later when in the fire, a crack, so it is rejected.

The potter can make a beautiful vase or a water jug out of the shapeless clay. This is what God is doing with each person, just as God made Moses and Pharaoh, both had the chance to chose which decision to make, one rejected, the other accepted.

God has His purpose

Romans 9:22-24.

God did not enjoy seeing Pharaoh behave as he did and suffer the consequences, note, God gave Pharaoh many chances to make the right decision. The actual Greek used in v22 apparently means "He fitted himself for destruction."

Romans 9:23. Neither does God enjoy seeing the people in the world suffer hardship and illness, but God is preparing men for His ultimate glory.

It was part of the plans of God, through Moses and ultimately Israel to revealed His love and mercy for Mankind and how great it was. But for Pharaoh & Egypt God had to show His power and anger with those who reject Him. Because neither deserved mercy, God cannot then be charged with injustice.

Jesus and Lazarus.

John 11:1-44.

"When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

Jesus is God so he knew all about Lazarus way before the message arrived, He knew that Lazarus would be dead before they arrive. From a human point of view they should have left immediately for Bethany, instead He deliberately waited two days until Lazarus would have died. Jesus said:-

"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. - Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. "

As soon as Martha heard that Jesus was approaching she goes out to meet him.

When she meets Jesus she blames Jesus for the death of Lazarus, yet still believed that He had the power to do something, see John 11:21,22.

"21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee."

Martha returns home to Mary but Jesus remains outside of the town, Mary, on hearing that Jesus was outside the town goes out to meet him, John 11:30,

"Lord, if only You had been here, my brother would not have died," It is possible that the disciples told Martha they had not come straight away. "You waited, you delayed. Why?"

"37 But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?""

Jesus knew all about it, but the death of Lazarus was meant to happen, the whole event was to give God the glory.

Jesus goes to the grave.

"38 Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.

39 "Take away the stone," he said.

.....

43 Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

God the Potter.

The Biblical stories and records we have looked at were all completely under the control of the all powerful God. He has a plan for His creation, He arranges things to happen so that He can mold a person or persons into His required shape and life.

Jeremiah 18:1-6.

"1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.

3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.

4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.

5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. "

Isaiah 45:9

"9 Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?"

Isaiah 64:8.

"8 But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand. "

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Roman 9:20ff.

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21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Each of us are the clay,"

What are you letting God do in your life?

Have you allowed Him to make you a "good vessel" when you first became a true Believer, then the "pot becomes cracked" and you have become useless in the "fire of life?"

Or has have you become a very suitable, well made vessel for the Lord?