

Romans 9:19-21 Commentary

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Romans 9:19 You will [say](#) to me [then](#), "[Why](#) does He [still find fault](#)? For [who resists](#) His [will](#)?" ([NASB: Lockman](#)) Greek: [Ereis](#) ([2SFAI](#)) [moi oun, Ti \[oun\] eti memphetai?](#) ([3SPMI](#)) [to gar boulemati autou tis anthesteken?](#) ([3SRAI](#))

Amplified: You will say to me, Why then does He still find fault and blame us [for sinning]? For who can resist and withstand His will? ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Barclay: But, then, you may ask, "If this is so how can God go on blaming men if they do not take his way? Who can withstand God's purpose?" ([Westminster Press](#))

ESV: You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" ([ESV](#))

NIV: One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?" ([NIV - IBS](#))

NKJV: You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?"

NLT: Well then, you might say, "Why does God blame people for not listening? Haven't they simply done what he made them do?" ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: Of course I can almost hear your retort: "If this is so, and God's will is irresistible, why does God blame men for what they do?" ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: Then you will say to me, Why does He still persist in finding fault? ([Eerdmans](#))

Young's Literal: Thou wilt say, then, to me, 'Why yet doth He find fault? for His counsel who hath resisted?'

ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS				
Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans 3:21-5:21	Romans 6:1-8:39	Romans 9:1-11:36	Romans 12:1-16:27
SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	WORK OF SALVATION

Summary of Romans 9-11		
Romans 9	Romans 10	Romans 11
Past Election	Present Rejection	Future Reception
God's Sovereignty Israel's Election by God	Man's responsibility Israel's Rejection of God	God's Ways Higher God Not Rejecting Israel

YOU WILL SAY TO ME THEN WHY DOES HE STILL FIND FAULT: Ereis (2SFAI) moi oun ti (oun) eti memphetai (3SPMI)

- **You will say** - Ro 3:8; 1Cor 15:12,35; Jas 1:13
- **Why does He** - Ro 3:5, 6, 7; Ge 50:20; 2Chr 20:6; Job 9:12, 13, 14, 15,19; 23:13,14; Ps 76:10; Isa 10:6,7; 46:10,11; Da 4:35; Mk 14:21; Acts 2:23; 4:27,28

You will say to me - Paul anticipates the argument based on the prior passages.

Find fault ([3201](#)) (**memphomai**) means to blame, to censure, to accuse, to be dissatisfied with someone most commonly due to errors of omission. Impute as blameworthy.

TDNT - means "to blame," "to scold," "to upbraid,"... "to chide," "to reproach,"... to declare oneself dissatisfied with something,"

NIDNTT - In Ro. 9:19 the word is used by Paul in a rhetorical question that occurs in an exposition of the sovereignty of God: "Why does He yet find fault?" In the light of God's sovereign inexorable purposes one may raise the question of human responsibility. The word **memphomai** clearly connotes "guilt" or blameworthiness in this context for Paul's argument is that God's sovereignty does not free sinful men of fault or guilt before God.

Webster - censure - : the act of blaming or condemning sternly. The act of blaming or finding fault and condemning as wrong; applicable to the moral conduct, or to the works of men. When applied to persons, it is nearly equivalent to blame, reproof, reprehension, reprimand. It is an expression of disapprobation, which often implies reproof.

Webster - blame - to find fault with; to express disapprobation of; to find fault with; opposed to praise or commend, and applicable most properly to persons, but applied also to things.

The only other NT use of **memphomai** is Hebrews 8:8 (apocryphal Lxx uses - 2Macc 2:7, Sir 11:7, Sir 41:7)...

For (see term of explanation - which forces you to observe Heb 8:6-7) **finding fault** with them, He says, "BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH;

Warren Wiersbe tells the following story: "I recall sharing in a street meeting in Chicago and passing out tracts at the corner of Madison and Kedzie. Most of the people graciously accepted the tracts, but one man took the tract and with a snarl crumpled it up and threw it in the gutter. The name of the tract was "Four Things God Wants You to Know." "There are a few things I would like God to know!" the man said. "Why is there so much sorrow and tragedy in this world? Why do the innocent suffer while the rich go free? Bah! Don't tell me there's a God! If there is, then God is the biggest sinner that ever lived!" And he turned away with a sneer and was lost in

the crowd."

Wuest - (Ro 9:19–21) "Hath resisted" is the perfect tense verb of anthistēmi, "to set one's self against, to withstand, resist, oppose." The simple verb is histēmi, "to stand," the prefixed preposition, anti, "against," thus, "to stand against." The use of the perfect tense here speaks of a process of standing against God's will which has come to a finished end, and the resulting state, that of a confirmed and permanent stand against God. **Vincent** says; "more correctly, withstandeth. The idea is the result rather than the process of resistance. A man may resist God's will, but cannot maintain his resistance. The question means who can resist Him? **Paul leaves the question unanswered, for there is no answer which a finite mind can either reason out nor understand, since it involves the sovereignty of God and the fact of man as a free moral agent. The point where both of these touch each other has never been found by man.**" (Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader)

Denney - But human nature is not so easily silenced. This interpretation of all human life, with all its diversities of character and experience, through the will of God alone, as if that will by itself explained everything, is not adequate to the facts. If Moses and Pharaoh alike are to be explained by reference to that will—that is, are to be explained in precisely the same way—then the difference between Moses and Pharaoh disappears. The moral interpretation of the world is annulled by the religious one. If God is equally behind the most opposite moral phenomena, then it is open to anyone to say, what Paul here anticipates will be said; why does He still find fault? For who withstands His resolve? **To this objection there is really no answer, and it ought to be frankly admitted that the apostle does not answer it.** The attempt to understand the relation between the human will and the divine seems to lead of necessity to an antinomy (the opposition of one law to another) which thought has not yet succeeded in transcending. To assert the absoluteness of God in the unexplained, unqualified sense of Ro 9:18 makes the moral life unintelligible; but to explain the moral life by ascribing to man a freedom over against God reduces the universe to anarchy. Up to this point Paul has been insisting on the former point of view, and he insists on it still as against the human presumption which would plead its rights against God; but in the very act of doing so he passes over (in Ro 9:22) to an intermediate standpoint, showing that God has not in point of fact acted arbitrarily, in a freedom uncontrolled by moral law; and from that again he advances in the following chapter to do full justice to the other side of the antinomy—the liberty and responsibility of man. The act of Israel, as well as the will of God, lies behind the painful situation he is trying to understand. ([Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

FOR WHO RESISTS HIS WILL: to gar boulemati autou tis anthesteken (3SRAI):

For - term of explanation - what is Paul explaining?

Resists (436) (**anthistemi** [word study] from **anti** = against + **histemi** = to cause to stand) is literally to stand or set against. To set one's self against. To withstand. **Anthistemi** means to arrange in battle against and so pictures a **face to face** confrontation. It means to set one's self against, to stand firm against someone else's onset, to oppose (place opposite or against), to resist by actively opposing pressure or power, to withstand (oppose with firm determination). It involves not only a psychological attitude but also a corresponding behavior. It was used to refer to an army arranging in battle against the enemy force and so to array against.

Anthistemi - 14x in 12v - Matt 5:39; Luke 21:15; Acts 6:10; 13:8; Rom 9:19; 13:2; Gal 2:11; Eph 6:13; 2 Tim 3:8; 4:15; Jas 4:7; 1 Pet 5:9

An opponent might say that Paul's conclusion in [Ro 9:18] leads to fatalism. Paul, however, does not give an analytical answer but in Romans 9:20 rebukes the questioner for such a preposterous conclusion. If a potter can do what he wishes with his vessels, certainly God can with His.

GOD'S BUSINESS! NOT OURS!

What one might say based on the preceding truths about God's choice is that if God does what He wills then it's not our fault – we don't really have a choice. **WRONG!** Read on...

William Newell explains - In His infinite wisdom and knowledge God reads with unerring accuracy the operations of the human heart: "Man looks on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looks on the heart." Man says, "*If I am not one of God's elect, an object of His mercy, then I cannot do right, and God should not blame me.*" I asked an intelligent man in western Michigan if he had believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. He burst out into loud laughing, saying,

"If I am elect, I will go to heaven; and if I am not elect, there is no use in my worrying about the question!"

I rebuked him sternly, with these words:

"God commands men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as He hath appointed a day in which He

will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He hath ordained!' (Acts 17:30-31KJV) God's **commands** are God's **enablings**, and if you will hearken to Him, you will be saved. But you will not dare to say to God in that day, I could not come because I was not of the elect; for that will not be true! The reason you refused to come, will be found to be your love of sin, not your non-election!"

God says, "Whosoever will," (Ro 10:13KJV) and the door is open to all, absolutely all. God means "Whosoever": and that is the word for you, sinner; and **not election**, which is **God's business, not yours!** ([Newell's Commentary on Romans](#))

Romans 9:20 On the **contrary**, **who** are you, **O man**, who **answers back** to **God**? The **thing molded** will not **say** to the **molder**, "**Why** did you **make me like this**," will it?

Greek: [o anthrope, menoungē su tis ei \(2SPA1\)](#) [o antapokrinomenos \(PMPMSN\)](#) [to theo? me erei \(3SFA1\)](#) [to plasma to plasanti. \(AAPMSD\)](#) [Ti me epoiesav \(2SAA1\)](#) [houtos?](#)

Amplified: But who are you, a mere man, to criticize and contradict and answer back to God? Will what is formed say to him that formed it, Why have you made me thus? [Isa. 29:16; 45:9.]

Barclay: Fellow! Who are you to be arguing with God? Surely the thing that is molded into shape cannot say to the man who molds it, "Why did you make me like this?"

ESV: But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?"

ICB: Do not ask that. You are only human. And human beings have no right to question God. An object cannot tell the person who made it, "Why did you make me like this?"

NIV: But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'"

NKJV: But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?"

NLT: No, don't say that. Who are you, a mere human being, to criticize God? Should the thing that was created say to the one who made it, "Why have you made me like this?"

Phillips: But the question really is this: "Who are you, a man, to make any such reply to God?" When a craftsman makes anything he doesn't expect it to turn round and say, 'Why did you make me like this?'

Wuest: For, with respect to His counsel, who has taken a permanent stand against it? O man, nay, surely, as for you, who are you who contradicts God? The moldable material shall not say to the one who molds it, Why did you make me thus, shall it?

Young's Literal: nay, but, O man, who art thou that art answering again to God? shall the thing formed say to Him who did form it, Why me didst thou make thus?

ON THE CONTRARY, WHO ARE YOU, O MAN, WHO ANSWERS BACK TO GOD: [o anthrope, menoungē su tis ei \(2SPA1\)](#) [o antapokrinomenos \(PMPMSN\)](#) [to theo:](#)

- **On the contrary** - Ro 2:1; Micah 6:8; 1Corinthians 7:16; James 2:20
- **Who are you** - Job 33:13; 36:23; 38:2,3; 40:2,5,8; 42:2, 3, 4, 5, 6; Matthew 20:15
- **Who answers back** - Job 16:3; Titus 2:9; 1Corinthians 1:20; 1Timothy 6:5

Amplified - But who are you, a mere man, to criticize and contradict and answer back to God?

The thrust of Paul's question is powerful - Who do you think you are to criticize, argue with, reply against and talk back to God like that? Can an object that was made say to its maker, "Why did you make me like this?"

Answers back (470)([antapokrinomai](#) from [antí](#) = against + [apokrinomai](#) = to give off a judgment, to answer <> [apó](#) = from + [kríno](#) = separate, discern, judge) means to reply to something, especially by making a declaratory and argumentative reply. To make unjustified accusations. Answer back, demand one's right (so to speak). Talk back. Contradict. To reply in contradiction to the speaker. Robertson says the idea is "to answer to one's face" (emphasizing the prefix "anti-" meaning against). In modern slang we might say

"he was in his opponent's face!"

Wuest explains that "**antapokrinomai** is made up of **apokrinomai** "to give off a judgment," thus, "to answer," and the prefixed preposition **anti** - "against," thus, "to answer by contradicting."

Vincent on antapokrinomai - "The word signifies here to reply to an answer which God had already given, and implies, as Godet observes, a spirit of contention."

The only other use of **antapokrinomai** is by Luke describing the Pharisees who tried to trap Jesus regarding the breaking of the Sabbath. His replies silenced His hypocritical adversaries "And they could make no reply to this." (Lk 14:6) There are 2 uses in the Lxx - Job 16:8 ("my leanness rises up against me. It **testifies** [Heb = anah = to answer, respond] to my face) and Job 32:12 ("no one **refuted** Job").

Denney - the objector is reminded emphatically of what he is, and of the person to whom he is speaking. It is not for a man to adopt this tone toward God... Paul... does not refute, but repels the objection. It is inconsistent, he urges, with the relation of the creature to the Creator.

Newell - Literally, this reads: "O man, yes! but rather,--you! who are you, replying against God?" Alford well says: "The words yea, rather,' take the ground from under the previous assertion and supersede it by another: implying that it has a certain show of truth, but that the proper view of the matter is yet to be stated. They thus convey, as in Luke 11:28, a rebuke,--here, with severity: That which thou hast said may be correct human reasoning,--but as against God's sovereignty, thy reasoning is out of place and irrelevant; the verse implying. Thou hast neither right nor power to call God to account in this matter.' These verses are a rebuke administered to the spirit of the objection, which forgets the immeasurable distance between us and God, and the relation of Creator and Disposer in which He stands to us." And Stifler warns: "He who replies against God must mean that it is God's hardening that deprives a soul of salvation; that if God did not interpose with an election and take some and leave others to be hardened, all men would have at least an equal opportunity of salvation. This is false. If God did not elect, none would be saved, for there is none that seek after God' (Romans 3:11). And, men are not lost because they are hardened; they are hardened because they are lost; they are lost because they are sinners. **God is not responsible for sin. He is under no obligation to save any one. Obligation and sovereignty cannot both be predicated of God. If He saves any one it is a sovereign act of mercy.**" ([Commentary on Romans](#))

Henry Morris - We have no right to ask God: "Why?" Remember that He answered Job's pleas for understanding merely by reminding Job of the fact of creation (Job 38-41). As our great Potter, He has the right to make His pottery vessels both for honor and dishonor (Ro 9:21). We who have been redeemed by His mercy should be grateful that He chose us even before the world began (Ep1:3, 4, 2Ti1:9), confident that He--by whatever means He chooses--is preparing His "vessels of mercy" (Ro 9:23) to receive the full manifestation of His glory in the ages to come (Ep 2:10). The fact that our finite minds cannot comprehend the simultaneous operation of divine election and human responsibility is irrelevant. Both Scripture and human experience demonstrate both to be true. We must both rest in that fact and act in light of it.

THE THING MOLDED WILL NOT SAY TO THE MOLDER, "WHY DID YOU MAKE ME LIKE THIS WILL IT: me erei (3SFAI) to plasma to plasanti (AAPMSD) ti me epoiesas (2SAAI) houtos:

- **The thing molded will not say** - Isaiah 29:16; 45:9-11

Paul quotes in part from Isaiah - Isa 29:16 You turn things around! Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay, That what is made should say to its maker, "He did not make me"; Or what is formed say to him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?

Don't you know that God is sovereign, just, merciful & by all rights should have condemned all men & yet He has sovereignly chosen to save some.

Then Paul describes 2 different vessels both made from the "same clay" (v21 "same lump") so to speak. Both deserve destruction & I have had mercy on some. God determines whether a man will be a Moses or a Pharaoh. Neither Moses, nor Pharaoh, nor anyone else, could choose his parents, his genetic structure, or his time and place of birth. We have to believe that these matters are in the hands of God. However, this does not excuse us from responsibility. Pharaoh had great opportunities to learn about the true God and trust Him, and yet he chose to rebel. Paul did not develop this aspect of truth because his theme was divine sovereignty, not human responsibility. The one does not deny the other, even though our finite minds may not fully grasp them both.

Newell - In the Scriptures, those who meet God, fall into the dust. "I am but dust and ashes," said Abraham, and Job: "Mine eye seeth Thee, and I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." A "thing," yea, and a formed thing, owing its very being to a Creator! Have we thus considered ourselves? Our only proper creature-attitude is one of faith, not questioning. These are days of man-vaunting, and God-despising. But they shall soon end, and the very earth on which man's legions marched in such pride, shall flee away "before the

Related resources...

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- Spurgeon on the Attributes of God
- Israel of God - Is God "Finished" with Israel in His prophetic plan?
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- [The Jewish People, Jesus Christ and World History - S Lewis Johnson](#)

Are you confused about God's plan for Israel? Then I highly recommend Tony Garland's 12 Hour Course on **Romans 9-11** in which he addresses in depth the question of **What Will Happen to Israel?** ([click](#)) or see the individual lectures below)

- [Romans 9:1-5 Paul's Sorrow Concerning Israel](#)
- [Romans 9:6-13 Children of the Promise](#)
- [Romans 9:14-24 The Potter and the Clay](#)
- [Romans 9:25-33 A Remnant Will be Saved](#)
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- [Romans 10:14-21 Has Israel Not Heard?](#)
- [Romans 11:1-6 God Has Not Cast Away The Jews](#)
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- [Romans 11:25-36 The Salvation of Israel](#)

Note that when you click the preceding links, each link will in turn give you several choices including an **Mp3 message** and brief transcript notes. The Mp3's are long (avg 70+ min) but are in depth and thoroughly Scriptural with many quotations from the Old Testament, which is often much less well understood than the NT by many in the church today. Tony Garland takes a **literal approach** to Scripture, and his love for the Jews and passion to see them saved comes through very clearly in these 12 hours of teaching! Take your home Bible Study group through this series if you dare! Take notes on the tapes as the transcripts are a very abbreviated version of the audio messages. **This course is highly recommended for all who love Israel!** I think you will agree that Tony Garland, despite coming to faith after age 30 as an engineer, clearly has been given a special anointing by God to proclaim the truth concerning Israel and God's glorious future plan for the Jews. Garland has also produced more than 20 hours of superb audio teaching in his verse by verse commentary on the [Revelation](#) (in depth transcripts also available) which will unravel (in a way you did not think was possible considering the plethora of divergent interpretations) God's final message of the triumph and return of our Lord Jesus Christ as the King of kings and Lord of lords! Maranatha!

Romans 9:21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another * for common use? (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: [e ouk echei \(3SPA\)](#) exousian [o kerameus tou pelou ek tou autou phuramatos poiesai \(AAN\)](#) [o men eis timen skeuos, o de eis atimian?](#)

Amplified: Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same mass (lump) one vessel for beauty and distinction and honorable use, and another for menial or ignoble and dishonorable use? ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Barclay: Has not the potter complete authority over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for an honourable use and another for a menial service? ([Westminster Press](#))

ESV: Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use and another for dishonorable use?

ICB: The man who makes a jar can make anything he wants to make. He can use the same clay to make different things. He can make one thing for special use and another thing for daily use.

NIV: Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use? ([NIV - IBS](#))

NKJV: Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

NLT: When a potter makes jars out of clay, doesn't he have a right to use the same lump of clay to make one jar for decoration and another to throw garbage into? ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: The potter, for instance, is always assumed to have complete control over the clay, making with one part of the lump a lovely vase, and with another a pipe for sewage. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: Or, does not the potter possess authority over the clay, out of the same lump to make, on the one hand, an instrument which is for honorable purposes and, on the other hand, one which is for dishonorable uses? ([Eerdmans](#))

Young's Literal: hath not the potter authority over the clay, out of the same lump to make the one vessel to honour, and the one to dishonour?

OR DOES NOT THE POTTER HAVE A RIGHT OVER THE CLAY: e ouk echei (3SPA1) exousian o kerameus tou pelou

- **Potter** - Ro 9:11,18; Proverbs 16:4; Isaiah 64:8; Jeremiah 18:3-6

Read **John MacArthur's** response to the question "[How do we understand Romans 9-22, -vessels of wrath prepared for destruction](#)"?"

Potter (2763)(kerameus > English "ceramic") is ne who makes earthenware pots

- [Potter - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)
- [Potter - Hastings' Dictionary](#)
- [Potter - Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words](#)
- [Potter - Kitto's Popular Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature](#)

It is not said that we are as clay in the potter's hands, but that God has the right over us that the potter has over his clay. One lump the potter can use for a splendid vase; another for a vessel for base uses.

Newell - As concerns the right of the Divine Potter over the human clay, we need to go with Jeremiah to "the potter's house": "I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he was making a work on the wheels. And the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? Such as is the clay in the potter's hands, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel" (Jeremiah 18:3-6). God called man "dust" in Eden (Ge 2:7; 3:19). And, "The nations are as a drop of a bucket and are accounted as the small dust of the balance" (Isaiah 40:15). When the apothecary would weigh an article accurately, he whisks out with a breath from the balances any former dust remaining therein: and there go the nations, all,--as regards greatness before God! Yet here is one atom of this "small dust" replying against God, saying, "What right has He to do thus with me?" Now it will not do to answer, "God is love"; "God so loved the world." True, indeed. But **God is God**, and the nations are "less than nothing, and vanity," as you read in Isaiah 40:17, and in many other Scriptures. God has rights high above all our poor comprehension. We know that God will always act righteously. We are not God's judges! God has a right "from the same lump of human clay to make one part a vessel unto honor, another unto dishonor." No godly person challenges that right. Nay, godly people most reverently bow to it! "What would the ability to fashion be worth, if it were under the dictation of that which is to be fashioned?" ([Commentary on Romans](#))

TO MAKE FROM THE SAME LUMP ONE VESSEL FOR HONORABLE USE, AND ANOTHER FOR COMMON USE: ek tou autou phuramatos poiesai (AAN) o men eis timen skeuos o de eis atimian:

- **Vessel** - Ro 9:22,23; Jeremiah 22:28; Hosea 8:8; Acts 9:15; 2Timothy 2:20,21-note)

All men come from the same "lump" of clay so to speak for...

just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned (Ro 5:12-note)

Thus all are lost and destined for perdition. God does not have to choose them for hell. They are already headed there because of their inherent and imputed sin and the sins they commit.

God in His sovereignty chooses some to be vessels of mercy and with the others exhibits a long fuse even though He has every right to destroy them. The vessels of wrath are **not** foreordained by God or chosen by God to go to hell. They prepare themselves for their ultimate destiny, which they receive because they have rejected the truth about God and His righteousness available only in Christ.

Honorable (5092)(**time** akin to **tio** = to value, honor) is "basically, the worth ascribed to a person or the value ascribed to a thing; (1) as the recognition of another's worth; (a) active honor, reverence, respect (Ro 12.10); (b) passive recognition, esteem, dignity bestowed (Jn 4.44); concretely, as a position of honor office, place of honor (Heb 2.9; 5.4); (c) honorarium, compensation, payment received for service (1Ti 5.17); (2) as the value ascribed to a thing; (a) price, value, price received or paid back (Acts 4.34); (b) figuratively value, benefit, usefulness (Col 2.23) (Friberg, et al: Analytical lexicon of the Greek New Testament)

NAS Usage - Usage: honor(28), honorable use(1), marks of respect(1), precious value(1), price(7), proceeds(1), sum(1), value(1).

Time - 41x in 40v - Matt 27:6, 9; John 4:44; Acts 4:34; 5:2f; 7:16; 19:19; 28:10; Rom 2:7, 10; 9:21; 12:10; 13:7; 1 Cor 6:20; 7:23; 12:23f; Col 2:23; 1 Thess 4:4; 1 Tim 1:17; 5:17; 6:1, 16; 2 Tim 2:20f; Heb 2:7, 9; 3:3; 5:4; 1 Pet 1:7; 2:7; 3:7; 2 Pet 1:17; Rev 4:9, 11; 5:12f; 7:12; 21:26

Believer's Study Bible - Although the illustration of the right of the potter to do with the vessel as he wishes, whether to honor or dishonor it, may certainly be applied to individual election, nevertheless, the election of the nation of Israel is the primary subject under discussion in ch9-11, and the principal application of the passage is to Israel. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Denney - Either you must recognize this absoluteness of God in silence, or you must make the preposterous assertion that the potter has not power over the clay, etc. The power of the potter over the clay is of course undoubted: he takes the same lump, and makes one vessel for noble and another for ignoble uses; it is not the quality of the clay, but the will of the potter, that decides to what use each part of the lump is to be put. True, the objector might say, but irrelevant. For man is not clay, and the relation of God to man is not that of the potter to dead matter. To say that it is, is just to concede the objector's point—the moral significance is taken out of life, and God has no room any longer to pronounce moral judgments, or to speak of man in terms of praise or blame. ([Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

William Newell has an interesting note...

In His infinite wisdom and knowledge God reads with unerring accuracy the operations of the human heart:

"Man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart."

Man says,

"If I am not one of God's elect, an object of His mercy, then I cannot do right, and God should not blame me."

I asked an intelligent man in western Michigan if he had believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. He burst out into loud laughing, saying,

"If I am elect, I will go to heaven; and if I am not elect, there is no use in my worrying about the question!"

I rebuked him sternly, with these words:

"God commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He hath ordained.' 'God's commands are God's enablings, 'and if you will hearken to Him, you will be saved. But you will not dare to say to God in that day, I could not come because I was not of the elect; for that will not be true! The reason you refused to come, will be found to be your love of sin, not your non-election!"

God says, "Whosoever will" and the door is open to all, absolutely all. God means "Whosoever": and that is the word for you, sinner; and not election, which is God's business, not yours. ([Romans Commentary](#))