

Vessels of Mercy

Romans 9:19-24

Does God
predestine
who is saved?

You will say to me then,
“Why does he still find **fault**?
For who can **resist** his will?”

But who are **you**, O man,
to answer back to **God**?

Romans 9:19-20 (ESV) (p.1/4)

Will what is **molded** say to its molder,
“**Why** have you made me like this?”

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?

Romans 9:20-21 (ESV) (p.2/4)

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,

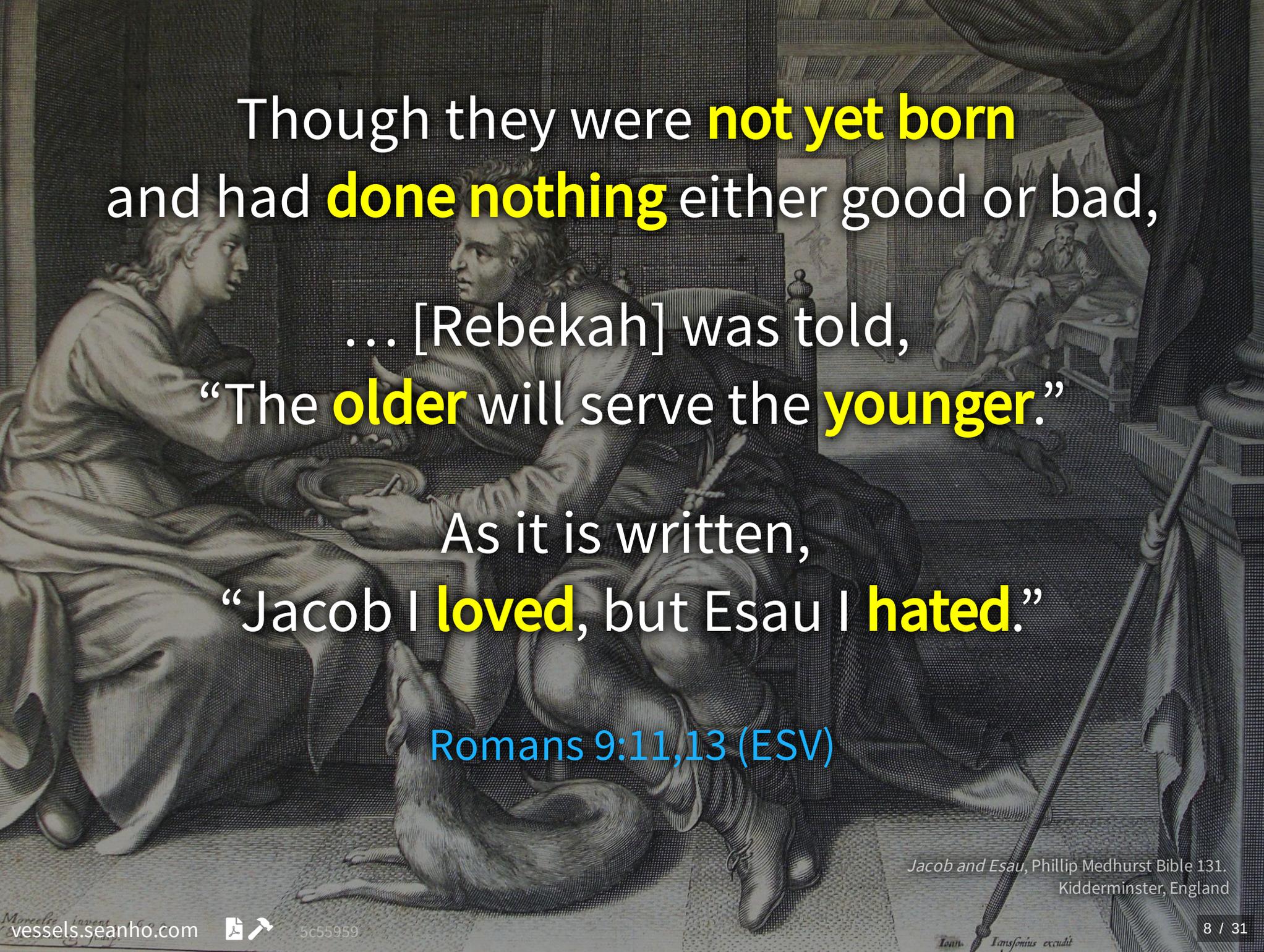
Romans 9:22 (ESV) (p.3/4)

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?

Romans 9:23-24 (ESV) (p.4/4)

Vessels of Mercy (Rom9)

1. God's **Election**: Jacob / Esau (v11-13)
2. God's **Justice**: Pharaoh (v14-18)
3. God's **Mercy**: Clay Pot (v19-24)

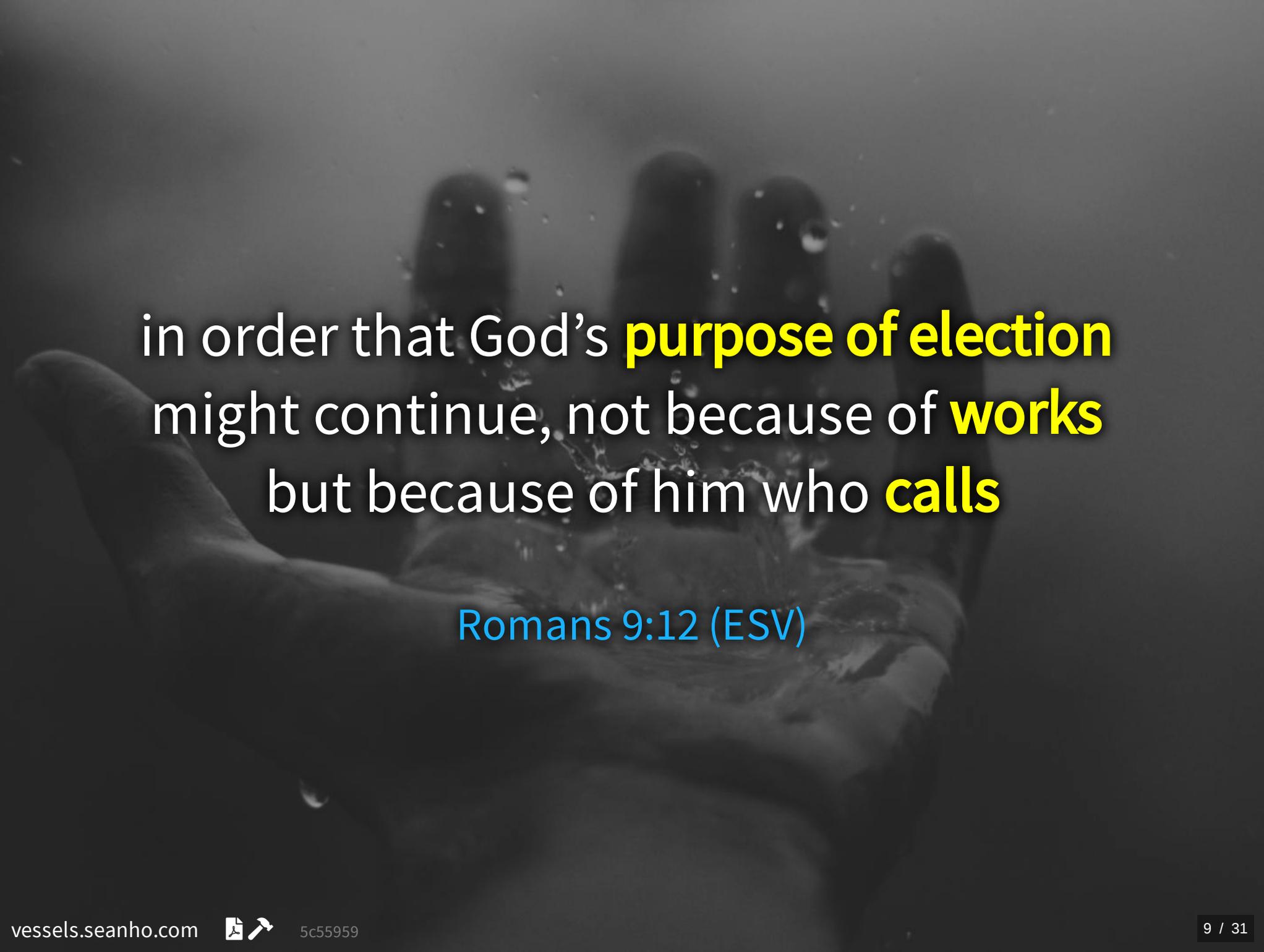
An engraving depicting the biblical scene of Jacob and Esau. In the foreground, Jacob is seated on the left, holding a bowl and a staff, while Esau sits on the right, leaning forward. A dog is lying on the floor between them. In the background, a woman is seen kneeling and nursing a child at a table. The scene is set in a room with a window and a doorway.

Though they were **not yet born**
and had **done nothing** either good or bad,
... [Rebekah] was told,
“The **older** will serve the **younger**.”

As it is written,
“Jacob I **loved**, but Esau I **hated**.”

Romans 9:11,13 (ESV)

*Jacob and Esau, Phillip Medhurst Bible 131.
Kidderminster, England*

A grayscale image of a hand held palm up, with water splashing from it. The background is dark and textured. The text is overlaid on the hand and water.

in order that God's **purpose of election**
might continue, not because of **works**
but because of him who **calls**

Romans 9:12 (ESV)

He **chose** us in him
before the **foundation** of the world, that
we should be **holy** and **blameless** before him.

In love he **predestined** us for **adoption**
to himself as sons through Jesus Christ

Ephesians 1:4-5 (ESV)

Cast away from you all the **transgressions**
that you have committed,
and make yourselves a **new heart**
and a **new spirit!**

Why will you die, O house of Israel?
For I have **no pleasure** in the death of anyone,
declares the Lord God; so **turn**, and **live.**

Ezekiel 18:31-32 (ESV)

Q: God **desires** all to be saved, but **not** all will be. **Why?**

- **Calvinism** (John Calvin, ~1550s)
 - (Reformed, most Baptist: e.g., [John Piper](#))
 - **Limited Atonement**: only for the elect
 - **Irresistable Grace**: sovereignty of God
- **Arminianism** (Jacobus Arminius, ~1590s)
 - (Methodist, some Menno: e.g., [Keith Drury](#))
 - **Resistable Grace** (“synergistic”)
 - **Unlim Atonement**: eff. to all who believe

The Bible is clear on:

- God is sovereign in His **authority**:
 - “God’s purpose of **election** ...” (Rom 9:12)
- God’s **character** desires to show grace:
 - “No **pleasure** in death of any ...” (Ez18:32)
- Man must **respond**: repent + follow
 - “**Turn** and live!” (Ez18:32, Rom 10:9-10)
 - ⇒ **urgency** of evangelism (Rom 10:13-15)

Why has God
shown **mercy**
to me?

Vessels of Mercy (Rom9)

1. God's Election: Jacob / Esau (v11-13)
2. **God's Justice: Pharaoh** (v14-18)
3. God's Mercy: Clay Pot (v19-24)

What shall we say then?
Is there **injustice** on God's part?

Romans 9:14 (ESV)

Theodicy (Is God Just?)

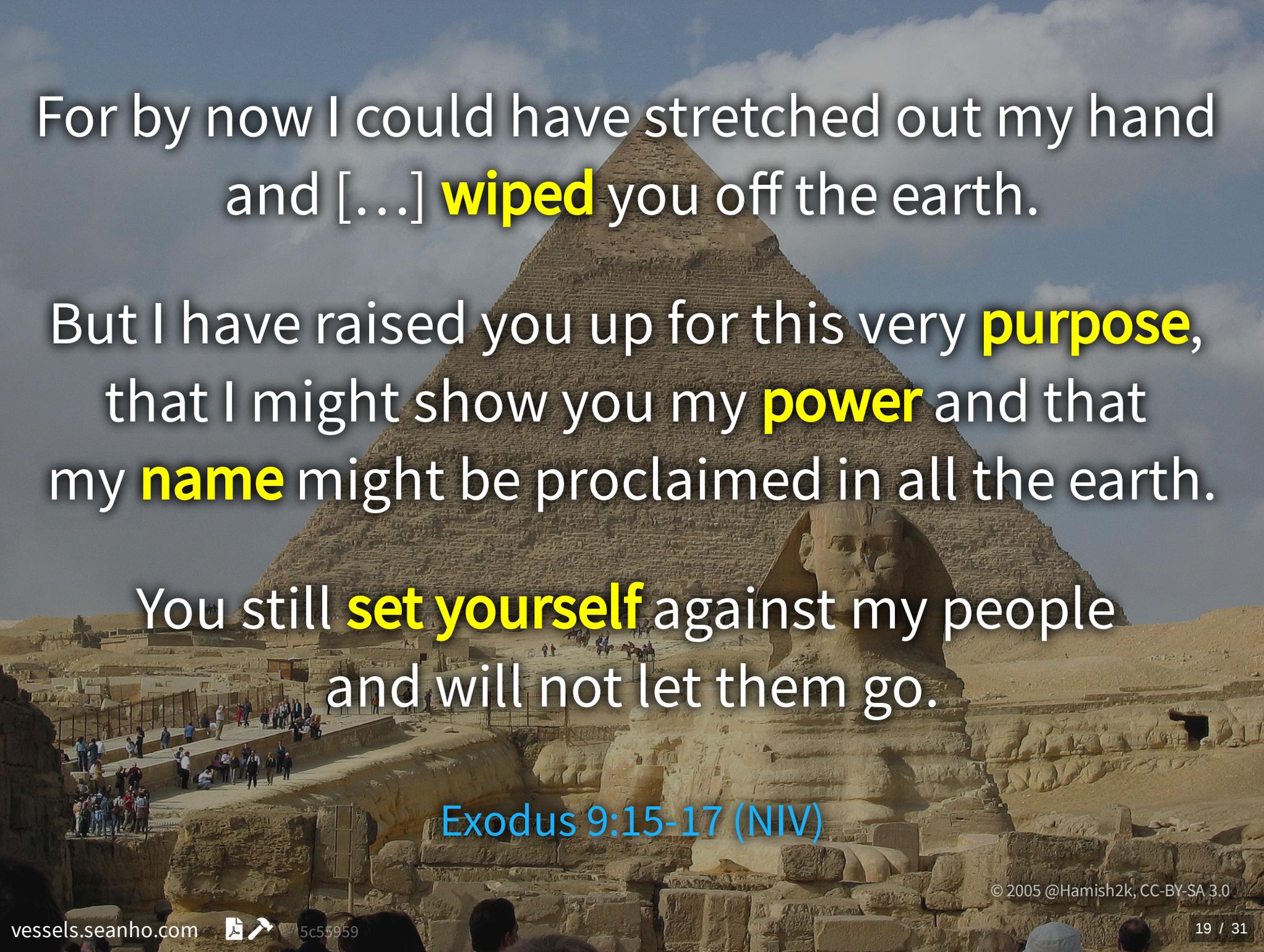
- Q (Mackie): If God is omniscient, omnipotent, and omni-benevolent, why is there evil?
- **Man's disobedience** (e.g., Augustine)
 - (Plantinga): free will defense
 - Omnipotent, need not make contradictions
 - Full autonomy $\Rightarrow \Leftarrow$ God's sovereignty
- **World is a school** (e.g., Irenaeus, Origen)
 - Suffering necessary for human growth
 - (Swinburne): free will \Rightarrow learn from mistakes
but see, e.g., *The Brothers Karamazov* (Dostoyevsky)

Certainly not! For He says to Moses,

“I will have **mercy** on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have **compassion** on whomever I will have compassion.”

So then it is not of him who **wills**, nor of him who **runs**, but of God who shows **mercy**.

Romans 9:15-16 (NKJV)



For by now I could have stretched out my hand
and [...] **wiped** you off the earth.

But I have raised you up for this very **purpose**,
that I might show you my **power** and that
my **name** might be proclaimed in all the earth.

You still **set yourself** against my people
and will not let them go.

Exodus 9:15-17 (NIV)

© 2005 @Hamish2k, CC-BY-SA 3.0

Why does God
allow **evil** to
flourish?

Vessels of Mercy (Rom9)

1. God's Election: Jacob / Esau (v11-13)
2. God's Justice: Pharaoh (v14-18)
3. **God's Mercy: Clay Pot** (v19-24)

A person wearing a dark t-shirt and a cap stands with their back to the camera, arms outstretched horizontally. They are in a field of tall, golden-brown grass. In the background, there is a dense line of trees on a hillside under a soft, hazy sky, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is contemplative and open.

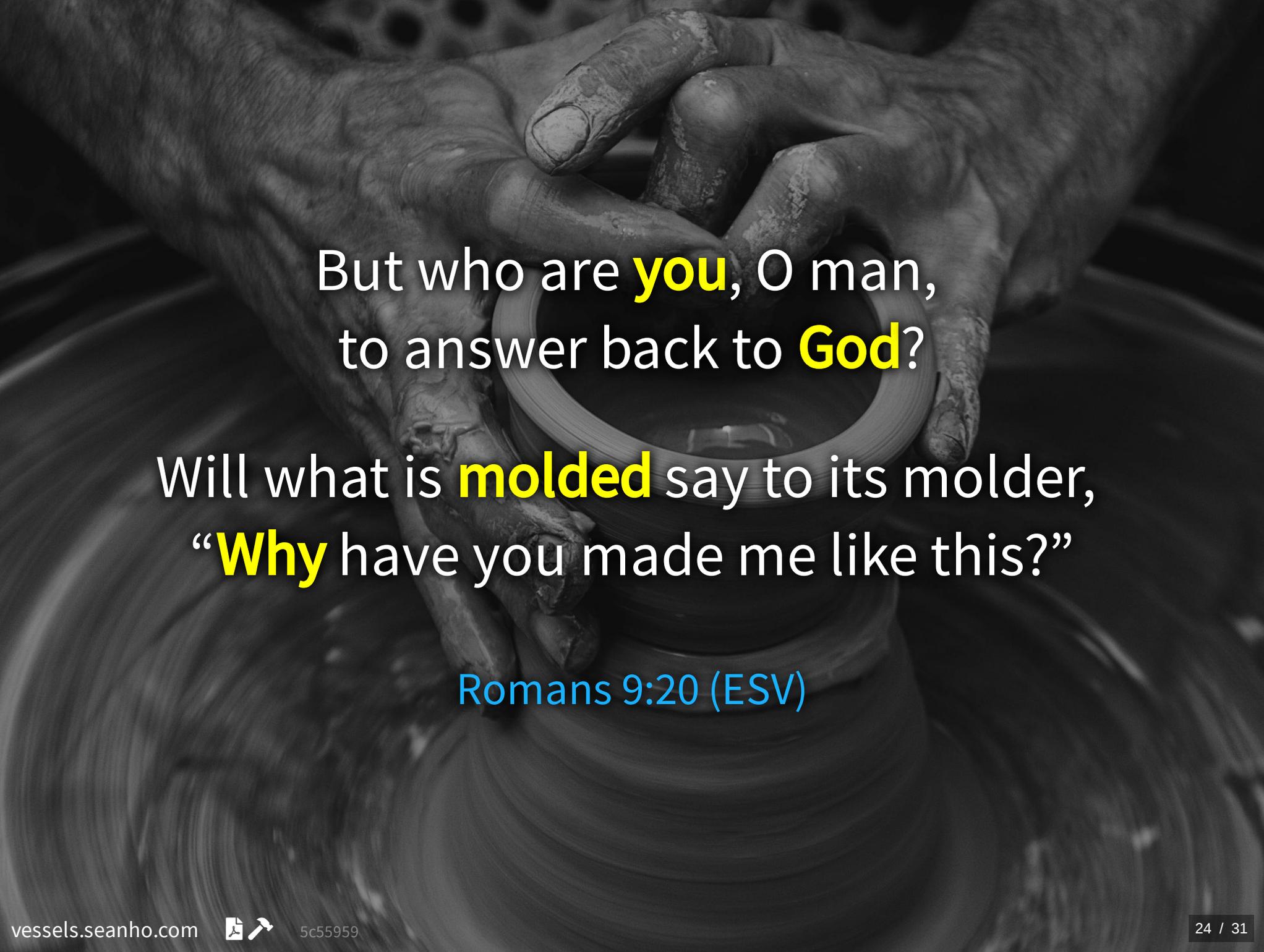
You will say to me then,
“Why does he still find **fault**?
For who can **resist** his will?”

Romans 9:19 (ESV)

Self-Actualisation vs. Self-Governance



Maslow's
Hierarchy



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?”

Romans 9:20 (ESV)



For when you were **slaves** of **sin**,
you were **free** in regard to **righteousness**.

What **fruit** did you have then
in the things of which you are now **ashamed**?
For the end of those things is **death**.

Romans 6:20-21 (NKJV)



[God] has endured with much **patience**
vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,

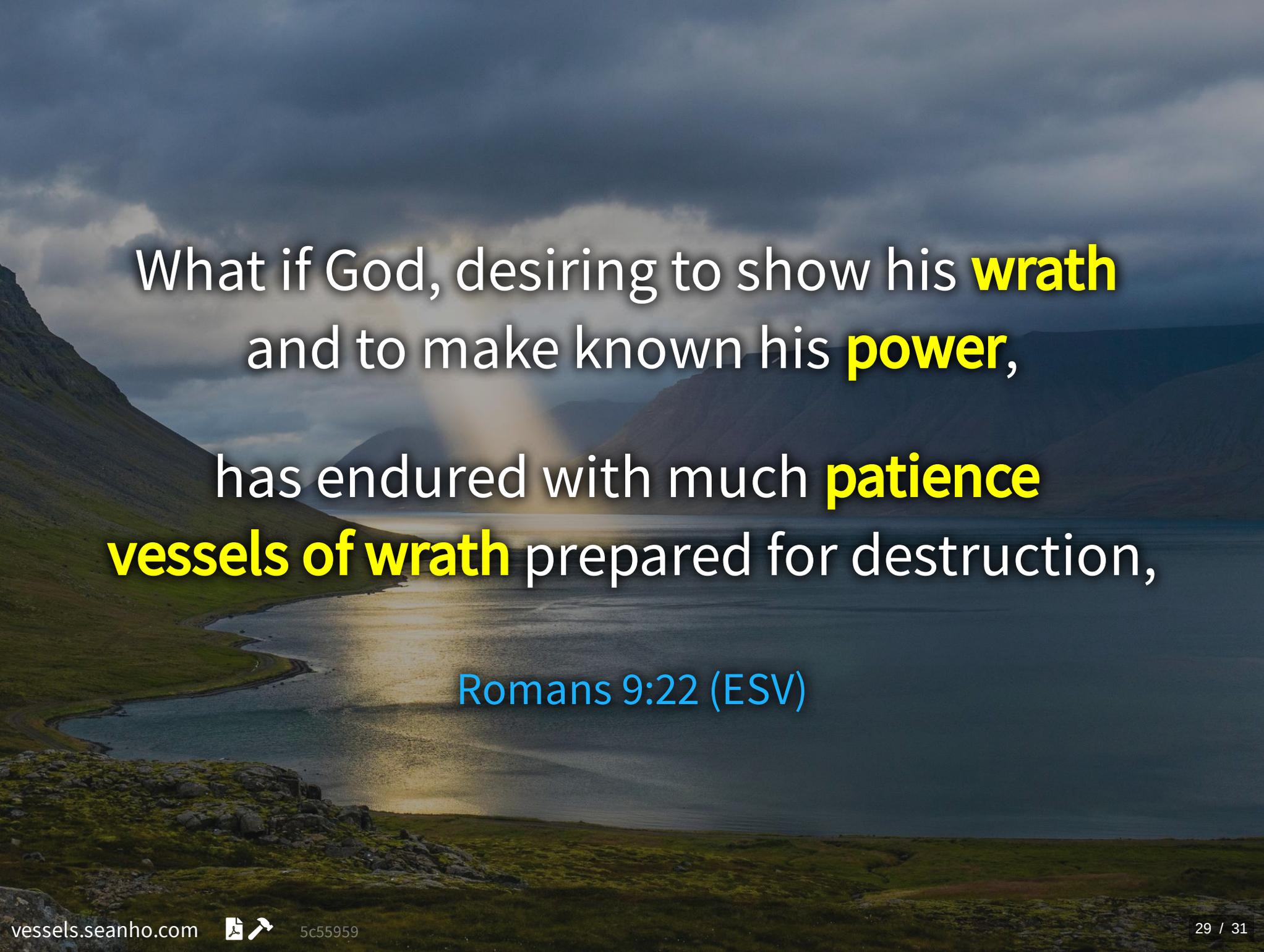
Romans 9:22 (ESV)



in order to make known
the **riches** of his glory
for **vessels of mercy**,
which he has **prepared** beforehand for glory

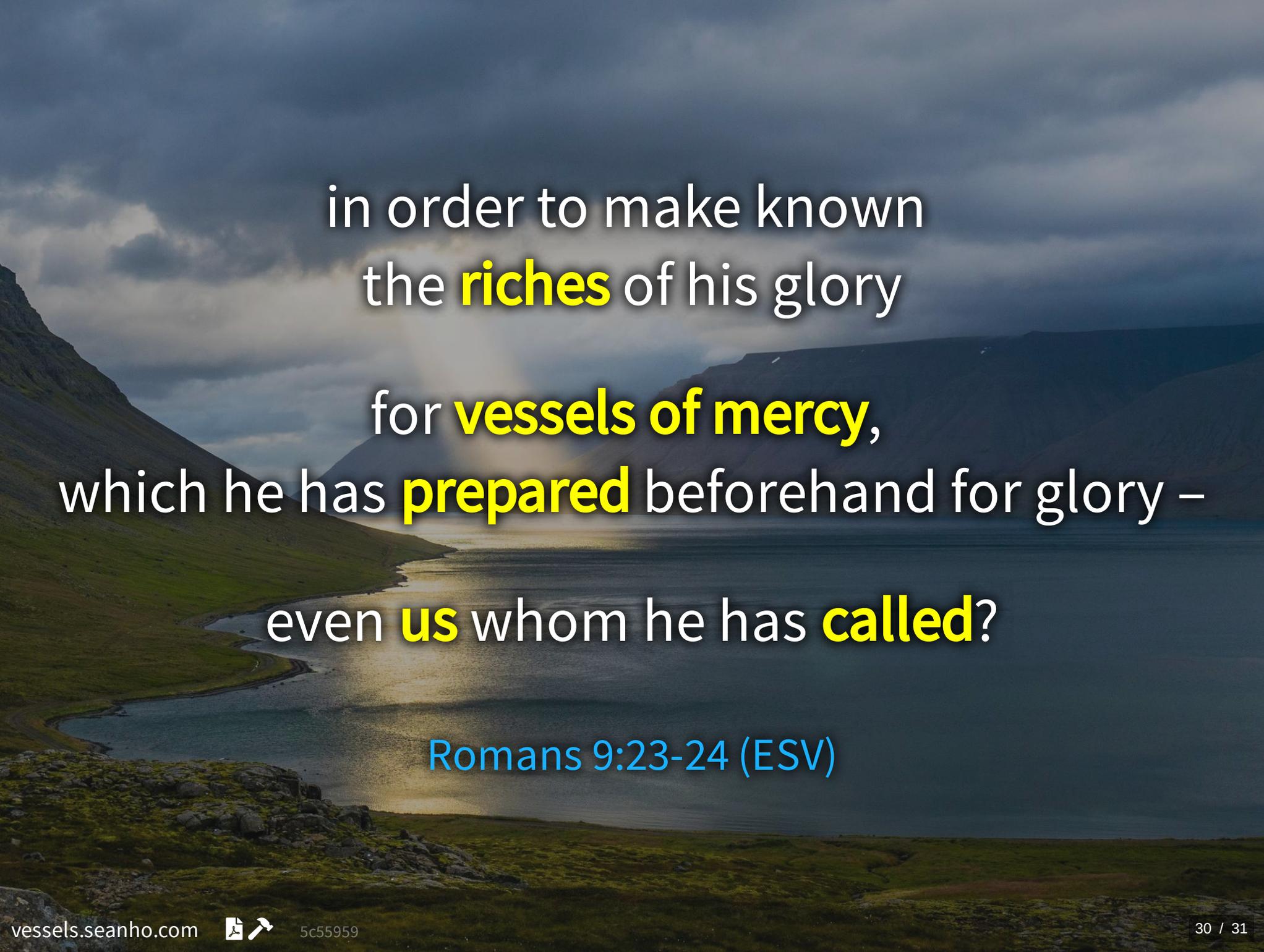
Romans 9:23 (ESV)

**Can I choose
my own purpose
and destiny?**



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,

Romans 9:22 (ESV)



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**?

Romans 9:23-24 (ESV)

