THE QUESTION

What does Paul mean by the potter and the clay (Romans 9:20–21)?

Asked by a THF member on May 19, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 9 numbered quotations · the 13 early Christian passages and 128 Bible verses we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/what-does-paul-mean-by-the-potter-and-the-clay-romans-9-20-21

The short answer *Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words*

Origen says Paul's potter picture does not mean God makes some people for ruin no matter what they do, since Paul also blames sinners and praises the faithful. Becoming a vessel of honor depends on God's work together with a free human response. Other writers use the picture to urge repentance while God can still reshape us.

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SHARING WITH AN AI?	Every quotation here comes from The Historic Faith’s library. If you paste this study into an AI, anything it adds beyond these pages comes from that AI, not from us.

IN THIS STUDY

1	Some read it as fixed fate	2	6	Clay can be reshaped until the furnace	4
2	Paul cannot contradict himself	2	7	God remakes His damaged work	5
3	Elsewhere Paul says we cleanse ourselves	3	8	The potter deserves the credit, not the clay	5
4	God's work and our will together	3		What these passages don’t tell us	5
5	The same act of God softens or hardens	4		The Sources: 13 early Christian passages and 128 Bible verses, with links	6

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POINT 1 OF 8

Some read it as fixed fate

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Origen first states the hard reading plainly. If God shapes some people for salvation and others for ruin, then being saved or lost would not depend on us at all. He raises this view so that he can answer it.

1 “For it will be said: If the potter of the same lump makes some vessels unto honor and others unto dishonor, and God thus forms some men for salvation and others for ruin, then salvation or ruin does not depend on us, nor do we have free will.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Origen,** *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 1 (c. 215–254 AD) **Source 7, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 2 OF 8

Paul cannot contradict himself

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Origen's first answer is that Paul blames sinners who did not repent and praises those who did well. That only makes sense if people are truly responsible. So the potter verse cannot mean that our choices count for nothing.

2 “Now we must ask him who deals with these passages in this way whether it is possible to think of the apostle as contradicting himself.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Origen,** *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 1 (c. 215–254 AD) **Source 7, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

3 “And if this cannot be imagined of an apostle, how shall he appear, according to them, to be just in blaming those who committed fornication in Corinth, or those who sinned and did not repent of their unchastity, and fornication, and uncleanness, which they had committed?”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Origen,** *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 1 (c. 215–254 AD) **Source 6, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
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POINT 3 OF 8

Elsewhere Paul says we cleanse ourselves

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Origen sets the potter verse beside another saying of Paul. There Paul says a person who cleanses himself becomes a vessel of honor. Origen says the two sayings do not clash and must be read together as one teaching.

4

"the apostle, in one place, does not claim that becoming a vessel unto honour or dishonour depends on God, but instead refers the whole matter back to ourselves"

later in the same passage

"and since his statements are not contradictory, we must reconcile them and draw one complete statement from both."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Origen,** *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 1 (c. 215–254 AD) **Source 8, page 7** Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

POINT 4 OF 8

God's work and our will together

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Origen's answer is that neither side works alone. Our own effort cannot make us grow without God, and God does not form us into honor or dishonor without our will, which can lean toward better or worse. Grace and a free response go together.

5

"Our own power, apart from the knowledge of God, does not compel us to make progress. Nor does the knowledge of God do so, unless we ourselves also contribute something to the good result."

later in the same passage

"Nor does the will of God alone form a man to honour or to dishonour, unless He holds our will to be a kind of matter that admits of variation, and that inclines to a better or worse course of conduct."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Origen,** *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 1 (c. 215–254 AD) **Source 8, page 7** Read it in the library ›

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POINT 5 OF 8

The same act of God softens or hardens

Our note · compiled by machine learning · Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words

Origen explains the nearby verse about hardening with a picture. The sun's one heat melts wax but hardens mud. In the same way, God's signs through Moses showed a hardness Pharaoh had formed himself, while others who saw them obeyed.

6

“In the same way, one and the same working on the part of God, administered by Moses in signs and wonders, made Pharaoh's hardness plain, a hardness that he had formed in the intensity of his wickedness.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Origen,** *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 1 (c. 215–254 AD) **Source 10, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 6 OF 8

Clay can be reshaped until the furnace

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

An early sermon credited to Clement of Rome uses the same picture as a call to repent. A potter can reshape a bent pot while it is still soft, but not after it goes into the fire. So we should repent now, while we still have the chance.

7

“Therefore, as long as we are on earth, let us practice repentance, because we are like clay in the hands of the craftsman. For if a potter makes a vessel and it is twisted out of shape or broken in his hands, he shapes it again.”

later in the same passage

“But if he has already thrown it into the furnace of fire, he can no longer help it.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Rome,** *Second Epistle* 8 (c. 88–99 AD) **Source 1, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
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POINT 7 OF 8

God remakes His damaged work

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Methodius pictures God as a potter who will not leave His work spoiled by the Evil One. He softens it back into clay and shapes it again, so its flaws can be removed. Here the potter image speaks of God's care to restore us.

8

"Instead, it moistened it and reduced it to clay, as a potter breaks up a vessel, so that by remaking it, all its blemishes and bruises might disappear, and it might be made new again, faultless and pleasing."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Methodius,** *From the Discourse on the Resurrection* (c. 270–311 AD) **Source 13, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 8 OF 8

The potter deserves the credit, not the clay

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Athenagoras uses the potter and clay to show how far God is above what He made. Clay cannot shape itself into a vessel. In the same way, the order of the world comes from God, and the praise belongs to Him as Maker.

9

"For the relation is like that of the potter and the clay. Matter is the clay, and the artist is the potter."

later in the same passage

"But just as clay cannot become vessels by itself without art, so matter, though it can receive all forms, did not receive distinction, shape, and order apart from God the Maker."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Athenagoras,** *A Plea for the Christians* 15 (c. 170–190 AD) **Source 2, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

THE LIMITS

What these passages don't tell us

- These passages do not walk through every verse of Romans 9 one by one.

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- Only Origen ties the potter picture directly to Paul's words in Romans 9; the other writers use the image in other settings.
- A word-for-word match shows that a quotation really is in our text. It does not show that our reading of it is right, or who wrote each work.

WHERE EVERY QUOTE CAME FROM

The Sources

The 13 early Christian passages and 128 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–13, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 14–133, in Bible order), then 8 more verses THF links to these passages, by reference. **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are in THF's updated English unless marked "1885 English" (the Roberts–Donaldson translation, public domain). "… [continues online]" marks a passage the library gave only in part. **On paper?** At **thehistoricfaith.com**, Bible verses are in the **Audio Bible** and early Christian writings in the **Library** (search for the title).

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS *13 passages from 6 writers*

Clement of Rome, *c. 88–99 AD · source 1*

1 *Second Epistle* 8 **Quote 7, page 4** "let us practice repentance, because we are like clay in the hands of the craftsman. For if a potter makes a vessel and it is twisted out of shape or… [continues online] **read ›**

Athenagoras, *c. 170–190 AD · source 2*

2 *A Plea for the Christians* 15 **Quote 9, page 5** "from the materials of his art—why are we called to account? For the relation is like that of the potter and the clay. Matter is the clay, and the… [continues online] **read ›**

Irenaeus, *c. 175–202 AD · sources 3–4*

3 *Against Heresies: Book IV* (1885 English; on point 5) "But," say they, "God hardened the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants." Those, then, who allege such difficulties, do not read in the Gospel that passage where the Lord… [continues online] **read ›**

4 *Against Heresies: Book III* (1885 English) "therefore Paul declares, "For God hath concluded all in unbelief, that He may have mercy upon all;" not saying this in reference to spiritual Æons, but to man, who had… [continues online] **read ›**

Tertullian, *c. 196–220 AD · source 5*

5 *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 6 to it by the One who made it. Even then it could glory, because that poor and small material, clay, came into the hands of God. Whatever those hands were… [continues online] **read ›**

Origen, *c. 215–254 AD · sources 6–11*

6 *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 1 **Quote 3, page 2** "God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, 'Why have you made me thus?' Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump… [continues online] **read ›**

7 *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 1 **Quotes 1, 2, page 2** "honor, and another unto dishonor?" For it will be said: If the potter of the same lump makes some vessels unto honor and others unto dishonor, and God thus forms… [continues online] **read ›**

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8 *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 1 **Quotes 4, 5, page 3** say that it depends on ourselves, but appears to attribute the whole matter to God, saying, "The potter has power over the clay, of the same lump to make one… [continues online] **read ›**

9 *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 1 (1885 English; on point 1) “not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another to dishonour… [continues online] **read ›**

10 *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 1 **Quote 6, page 4** Suppose someone were to say that it is the sun that hardens and melts, although melting and hardening are opposite things. It is not incorrect to say that the sun… [continues online] **read ›**

11 *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 1 (1885 English; on point 1) “not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour… [continues online] **read ›**

Methodius, *c. 270–311 AD · sources 12–13*

12 *From the Discourse on the Resurrection* (on point 7) “again he made another vessel, as it pleased him to make it… [continues online] **read ›**

13 *From the Discourse on the Resurrection* **Quote 8, page 5** “One, who wickedly harmed it out of envy. Instead, it moistened it and reduced it to clay, as a potter breaks up a vessel, so that by remaking it, all… [continues online] **read ›**

THE BIBLE *120 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

14 **Exodus 4:21** And the Lord said to Moses, “As you go and return to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the wonders that I have put in your hands. But I will harden his heart, and he will by no means send the people away. **read ›**

15 **Exodus 7:14** Then the Lord said to Moses, “Pharaoh’s heart has been hardened, so that he will not send the people away. **read ›**

16 **Exodus 8:15** But when Pharaoh saw that relief had come, his heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, just as the Lord had said. (Septuagint Exodus 8:11 (Exodus 8:15 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

17 **Exodus 9:12** But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not listen to them, just as the Lord had commanded. **read ›**

18 **Exodus 10:1** Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, so that these signs may come upon them one after another, **read ›**

19 **Exodus 14:4** And I will harden the heart of Pharaoh, and he shall pursue them; and I will be glorified in Pharaoh and in all his army, and all the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord.” And they did so. **read ›**

20 **Exodus 14:8** The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt and of his servants, and he pursued the children of Israel; but the children of Israel were going out with a high hand. **read ›**

21 **Exodus 14:17** And behold, I will harden the heart of Pharaoh and of all the Egyptians, and they shall go in after them; and I will be glorified in Pharaoh and in all his army, and in his chariots and in his horses. **read ›**

22 **Exodus 20:6** and showing mercy to thousands, to those who love me and to those who keep my statutes. **read ›**

23 **Exodus 32:4** He received them from their hands and formed them with an engraving tool, and he made them into a molten calf. And he said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.” **read ›**

24 **Exodus 33:19** And the Lord said, “I will pass by before you in my glory, and I will call by my name, ‘The Lord,’ before you; and I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” **read ›**

25 **Leviticus 6:21** It shall be made on a griddle with oil; he shall bring it kneaded, in rolls, a sacrifice of broken pieces, a sacrifice for a pleasing aroma to the Lord. (Septuagint Leviticus 6:14 (Leviticus 6:21 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

26 **Leviticus 11:33** And any clay vessel into which any of these falls, whatever is inside it shall be unclean, and the vessel shall be broken. **read ›**

27 **Leviticus 15:12** A clay vessel that the man with the discharge touches shall be broken, and a wooden vessel shall be rinsed in water, and it shall be clean. **read ›**

28 **Deuteronomy 2:30** But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him, because the Lord our God hardened his spirit and made his heart stubborn, that he might be delivered into your hands, as it is today. **read ›**

29 **Deuteronomy 10:16** So you shall circumcise your hardness of heart, and you shall not harden your neck. **read ›**

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30 **Joshua 11:20** For it was from the Lord that their hearts were strengthened to come against Israel in battle, so that they might be utterly destroyed, that no mercy might be given them, but that they might be utterly destroyed, as the Lord had said to Moses. **read ›**

31 **1 Samuel 6:6** Why do you harden your hearts, as Egypt and Pharaoh hardened their heart? When he mocked them, did they not send them away, and they departed? **read ›**

32 **1 Kings 7:33** The work of the wheels was like the work of chariot wheels; their axles, their rims, and all their workmanship were cast. (Septuagint 3 Kingdoms 7:19 (1 Kings 7:33 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

33 **2 Kings 20:4** Isaiah was in the middle court when the word of the Lord came to him, saying, **read ›**

34 **1 Chronicles 4:23** These were the potters who lived in Ataim and Gadira with the king; they grew strong in his kingdom and lived there. **read ›**

35 **1 Chronicles 12:11** Jethi the sixth, Eliab the seventh, (Septuagint 1 Chronicles 12:12 (1 Chronicles 12:11 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

36 **1 Chronicles 16:13** O seed of Israel, his servants, sons of Jacob, his chosen ones. **read ›**

37 **2 Chronicles 4:17** In the region around the Jordan the king cast them, in the thick clay of the ground, in the house of Succoth and between that and Saredatha. **read ›**

38 **Psalms 13:2** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

39 **Psalms 76:10** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

40 **Ecclesiastes 2:5** I made myself gardens and parks, and I planted in them every kind of fruit tree; **read ›**

41 **Isaiah 10:25** For yet a little while, and the anger will cease, but my wrath will be against their counsel. **read ›**

42 **Isaiah 13:15** For whoever is caught will be overcome, and those who are gathered together will fall by the sword. **read ›**

43 **Isaiah 15:3** Wrap yourselves in sackcloth in her squares, and lament on her rooftops and in her lanes; all of you, wail with weeping. **read ›**

44 **Isaiah 29:16** Will you not be counted as the potter’s clay? Shall the thing formed say to him who formed it, ‘You did not form me’? Or the thing made to its maker, ‘You did not make me with understanding’? **read ›**

45 **Isaiah 30:14** And its fall will be like the breaking of an earthenware vessel, like small pieces of a jar, so that no shard will be found among them with which you could take up fire, or with which you could scoop a little water. **read ›**

46 **Isaiah 45:9** What better thing have I prepared, like the clay of a potter? Will the plowman plow the earth all day long? Shall the clay say to the potter, “What are you doing, that you do not work, nor have hands?” Shall the thing formed answer the one who formed it? **read ›**

47 **Isaiah 64:8** And now, O Lord, you are our Father, and we are clay, all of us the work of your hands. (Septuagint Isaiah 64:7 (Isaiah 64:8 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

48 **Jeremiah 2:9** Therefore I will still enter into judgment with you, and I will enter into judgment with your children’s children. **read ›**

49 **Jeremiah 18:2** Arise and go down to the potter’s house, and there you will hear my words. **read ›**

50 **Jeremiah 18:3** So I went down to the potter’s house, and behold, he was making a work on the stones. **read ›**

51 **Jeremiah 18:4** And the vessel that he was making in his hands fell; and again he made it into another vessel, as it pleased him to make it. **read ›**

52 **Jeremiah 18:6** Shall I not be able to do with you as this potter does, O house of Israel? Behold, like the potter’s clay you are in my hands. **read ›**

53 **Jeremiah 19:1** Then the Lord said to me: Go and buy a potter’s clay jar, and take some of the elders of the people and of the priests, **read ›**

54 **Jeremiah 30:13** There is no one to judge your cause; you have been treated painfully for healing; there is no help for you. (Septuagint Jeremiah 37:13 (Jeremiah 30:13 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

55 **Jeremiah 46:5** Why are they terrified and drawing back? Because their mighty men will be cut down; they have fled in flight and have not turned back, hemmed in on every side, says the Lord. (Septuagint Jeremiah 26:5 (Jeremiah 46:5 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

56 **Lamentations 1:6** Waw. And from the daughter of Zion all her majesty has been taken away; her rulers became like rams that find no pasture, and they went on without strength before the pursuer. **read ›**

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57 **Lamentations 1:7** Zain. Jerusalem remembered the days of her humiliation and of her rejection, all her desirable things that were from days of old, when her people fell into the hand of the oppressor, and there was none to help her; her enemies saw it and laughed at her dwelling. **read ›**

58 **Lamentations 1:14** Nun. Watch has been kept over my ungodly deeds; they are twined together in my hands; they have come up upon my neck; my strength has failed; for the Lord has put pains in my hands; I shall not be able to stand. **read ›**

59 **Ezekiel 5:2** A fourth part you shall burn in the fire in the midst of the city at the fulfillment of the days of the siege; and you shall take a fourth part and burn it up in its midst; and a fourth part you shall cut down with the sword all around it; and a fourth part you shall scatter to the wind; and I will draw out a sword after them. **read ›**

60 **Ezekiel 10:9** And I looked, and behold, four wheels stood beside the cherubim, one wheel beside each cherub; and the appearance of the wheels was like the appearance of a carbuncle stone. **read ›**

61 **Ezekiel 30:19** And I will execute judgment on Egypt, and they shall know that I am the Lord. **read ›**

62 **Ezekiel 31:3** Behold, Asshur was a cypress in Lebanon, beautiful in its shoots and lofty in stature; its top was among the clouds. **read ›**

63 **Ezekiel 33:6** But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not sound the trumpet, and the people do not take warning, and the sword comes and takes a person from among them, that person was taken because of his own iniquity, but I will require the blood at the hand of the watchman. **read ›**

64 **Ezekiel 37:13** and you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves to bring my people up out of the graves. **read ›**

65 **Ezekiel 38:14** Therefore prophesy, Son of man, and say to Gog, Thus says the Lord: Will you not in that day, when my people Israel are settled in peace, rise up, **read ›**

66 **Amos 5:22** For even if you bring me whole burnt offerings and your sacrifices, I will not accept them, and I will not look upon your splendid peace offerings. **read ›**

67 **Amos 6:6** who drink strained wine and anoint themselves with the finest ointments, and have suffered nothing over the ruin of Joseph. **read ›**

68 **Micah 5:9** Your hand shall be lifted up against those who oppress you, and all your enemies shall be utterly destroyed. (Septuagint Micah 5:8 (Micah 5:9 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

69 **Malachi 1:9** And now, appease the face of your God, and plead with him. By your hands these things have been done; shall I accept your persons from you? says the Lord Almighty. **read ›**

70 **Tobit 13:2** For he whips and has mercy; he leads down to Hades and brings up again; and there is no one who will escape his hand. **read ›**

71 **Wisdom of Solomon 5:22** and hailstones full of wrath will be hurled as from a catapult; the water of the sea will rage against them, and rivers will overwhelm them without mercy; **read ›**

72 **Wisdom of Solomon 6:6** For the lowliest may be pardoned in mercy, but the mighty will be mightily examined. **read ›**

73 **Wisdom of Solomon 11:9** For when they were tested, though they were disciplined in mercy, they learned how the ungodly were tormented when judged in anger. **read ›**

74 **Wisdom of Solomon 13:13** but taking the leftover scrap among them, useful for nothing, a crooked piece of wood grown full of knots, he carves it with the diligence of his idle hours, and shapes it with the skill of his understanding; he fashions it in the image of a man, **read ›**

75 **Wisdom of Solomon 15:7** For a potter, laboriously pressing soft earth, molds each vessel for our service; but from the same clay he has formed both the vessels that serve clean uses and those of the opposite kind, all alike; but the clay-worker is the judge of what the use of each of these shall be. **read ›**

76 **Wisdom of Solomon 15:8** And with evil toil he molds a futile god from the same clay, he who a little before was born of earth and after a little while goes back to that from which he was taken, when the debt of his soul is demanded back. **read ›**

77 **Wisdom of Solomon 15:13** For this man, more than all others, knows that he sins, when he fashions fragile vessels and carved images from earthy matter. **read ›**

78 **Wisdom of Solomon 18:7** The salvation of the righteous and the destruction of the enemies were awaited by your people. **read ›**

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79 **Wisdom of Solomon 18:25** To these the destroyer yielded, and these they feared; for the mere trial of the anger was enough. **read ›**

80 **Wisdom of Solomon 19:1** But merciless wrath pressed upon the ungodly to the end; for he knew beforehand even what they would do: **read ›**

81 **Wisdom of Sirach 16:11** Even if there is one stiff-necked man, it will be a marvel if he goes unpunished; for mercy and anger come from him; he is mighty in atonements, and pours out anger. **read ›**

82 **Wisdom of Sirach 16:12** As great as his mercy, so great also is his rebuke; he judges a man according to his works. **read ›**

83 **Wisdom of Sirach 18:13** The mercy of man is toward his neighbor, but the mercy of the Lord is upon all flesh, rebuking and disciplining and teaching, and turning them back, as a shepherd his flock. **read ›**

84 **Wisdom of Sirach 27:5** The furnace tests the potter's vessels, and the testing of a man is in his reasoning. **read ›**

85 **Wisdom of Sirach 36:13** Have compassion on the city of your sanctuary, Jerusalem, the city of your rest. (Septuagint Wisdom of Sirach 36:18 (Wisdom of Sirach 36:13 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

86 **Wisdom of Sirach 38:29** So it is with the potter sitting at his work and turning the wheel with his feet, who is always set with care upon his work, and all his work is by number. **read ›**

87 **Wisdom of Sirach 38:30** With his arm he will shape the clay, and bend his strength before his feet; he will apply his heart to finish the glazing, and his sleepless nights go to cleaning the furnace. **read ›**

88 **Wisdom of Sirach 39:18** At his command is all his good pleasure, and there is no one who will lessen his salvation. **read ›**

89 **Wisdom of Sirach 39:23** So the nations will inherit his anger, as he turned waters into brine. **read ›**

90 **Wisdom of Sirach 39:28** There are spirits that have been created for vengeance, and in their wrath they have made their whips firm; and in the time of the end they will pour out their strength, and will calm the wrath of the one who made them. **read ›**

91 **Wisdom of Sirach 39:29** Fire and hail and famine and death, all these have been created for vengeance; **read ›**

92 **Wisdom of Sirach 47:22** But the Lord will never forsake his mercy, nor will any of his works perish; he will never blot out the descendants of his chosen one, nor will he take away the seed of him who loved him; and he gave a remnant to Jacob, and to David a root from him. **read ›**

93 **Baruch 4:25** My children, endure with patience the anger that has come upon you from God. Your enemy has pursued you, but you will soon see his destruction, and you will tread upon their necks. **read ›**

94 **Letter of Jeremiah 1:17** For as a man's vessel becomes useless when it is broken, so are their gods; when they are set up in the houses, their eyes are full of dust from the feet of those who come in. **read ›**

95 **2 Maccabees 7:38** and that through me and my brothers the wrath of the Almighty, which has justly fallen on our whole race, may come to an end." **read ›**

96 **4 Maccabees 13:15** for great is the contest of the soul, and the danger that lies in eternal torture for those who transgress the commandment of God. **read ›**

97 **4 Maccabees 15:3** loved more the godliness that saves to eternal life according to God. **read ›**

98 **1 Enoch 1:6** The high mountains shall be shaken and shall fall and be broken apart, and the high hills shall be brought low, so that the mountains flow away; and they shall melt like wax before the fire, in the flame. **read ›**

99 **1 Enoch 1:7** The earth shall be split apart, torn by a crack, and all that is on the earth shall perish, and there shall be judgment upon all. **read ›**

100 **1 Enoch 1:14** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

101 **1 Enoch 27:4** In the days of their judgment they shall bless him in mercy, as he has apportioned to them." **read ›**

102 **1 Enoch 39:2** And in those days Enoch received books of zeal and wrath, and books of turmoil and expulsion. And mercy shall not be granted to them, says the Lord of Spirits. **read ›**

103 **1 Enoch 58:2** Blessed are you, you righteous and chosen, for glorious shall be your lot. **read ›**

104 **1 Enoch 96:8** Woe to you, you mighty, who with might oppress the righteous; for the day of your destruction is coming. In those days many good days shall come to the righteous, in the day of your judgment. **read ›**

105 **1 Enoch 101:4** Do you see the shipmasters who sail the sea, their ships shaken by the waves and the storm, **read ›**

106 **Luke 11:13** If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?" **read ›**

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107 **John 3:17** For God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through him. **read ›**

108 **Acts 7:3** and said to him, ‘Go out from your land, from your relatives, and come into a land that I will show you.’ **read ›**

109 **Acts 10:22** They said, “Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous man and one who fears God, and well spoken of by all the nation of the Jews, was directed by a holy angel to invite you to his house, and to listen to what you say.” **read ›**

110 **Acts 14:27** When they arrived and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. **read ›**

111 **Romans 2:5** But because of your hardness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath and revelation and righteous judgment of God, **read ›**

112 **Romans 3:16** ruin and misery are in their ways, **read ›**

113 **Romans 3:19** Now we know that whatever things the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God. **read ›**

114 **Romans 8:30** Whom he predestined, those he also called. Whom he called, those he also justified. Whom he justified, those he also glorified. **read ›**

115 **Romans 9:11** For before the children had been born or had done anything good or bad, so that God’s purpose according to choosing might stand, not from works but from him who calls, **read ›**

116 **Romans 9:15** For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” **read ›**

117 **Romans 9:16** So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who has mercy. **read ›**

118 **Romans 9:18** So then, he has mercy on whom he desires, and he hardens whom he desires. **read ›**

119 **Romans 9:19** You will say then to me, “Why does he still find fault? For who withstands his will?” **read ›**

120 **Romans 9:20** But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed ask him who formed it, “Why did you make me like this?” **read ›**

121 **Romans 9:21** Or has not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel for honor, and another for dishonor? **read ›**

122 **Romans 9:22** What if God, willing to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, **read ›**

123 **Romans 9:23** and did so to make known the riches of his glory on vessels of mercy, which he prepared beforehand for glory— **read ›**

124 **Romans 11:1** I ask then, did God reject his people? May it never be! For I also am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. **read ›**

125 **Romans 11:7** What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks, but the chosen ones obtained it, and the rest were hardened, **read ›**

126 **Romans 11:32** For God has bound all to disobedience, that he might have mercy on all. **read ›**

127 **2 Corinthians 2:2** For if I make you grieve, then who will make me glad but he who is made to grieve by me? **read ›**

128 **2 Corinthians 4:2** But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. **read ›**

129 **2 Corinthians 4:11** For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus may be revealed in our mortal flesh. **read ›**

130 **Galatians 1:17** nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia. Then I returned to Damascus. **read ›**

131 **Ephesians 1:5** having predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, **read ›**

132 **Ephesians 1:11** in him. In him we were also assigned an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, **read ›**

133 **Ephesians 2:3** We also all once lived among them in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. **read ›**

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ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *8 verses, by reference*

Partly machine-linked: related to the passages, not always quoted in them. Each reference links to the verse in our audio Bible.

Genesis 3:20

Ezekiel 11:19

John 13:35

Romans 2:4

2 Corinthians 5:10

Galatians 5:8

Philippians 2:6

2 Timothy 1:16

Searched: Ante-Nicene Fathers volumes 1–9 and the Bible, including the Septuagint.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

A THF member asked “What does Paul mean by the potter and the clay (Romans 9:20–21)?” on May 19, 2026. The Historic Faith answered it as a public study on November 9, 2026.

Library only. This study was written only from The Historic Faith’s library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed above, with a link to read it.

How it was made. Compiled by machine learning from The Historic Faith’s library of early-Christian writings and the Bible only. Every quotation was matched word for word against our stored text. Not yet reviewed by The Historic Faith.

How to cite this study. The Historic Faith, “What does Paul mean by the potter and the clay (Romans 9:20–21)?” Early Church Questions, published November 9, 2026, https://thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/what-does-paul-mean-by-the-potter-and-the-clay-romans-9-20-21. To cite one quotation, add its number and source, for example “quote 1, source 7.”

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THE END OF THIS STUDY