

# Symbolic Acts

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Romans 9: 21.



“Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?”  
Romans 9: 21.



# I. Introduction

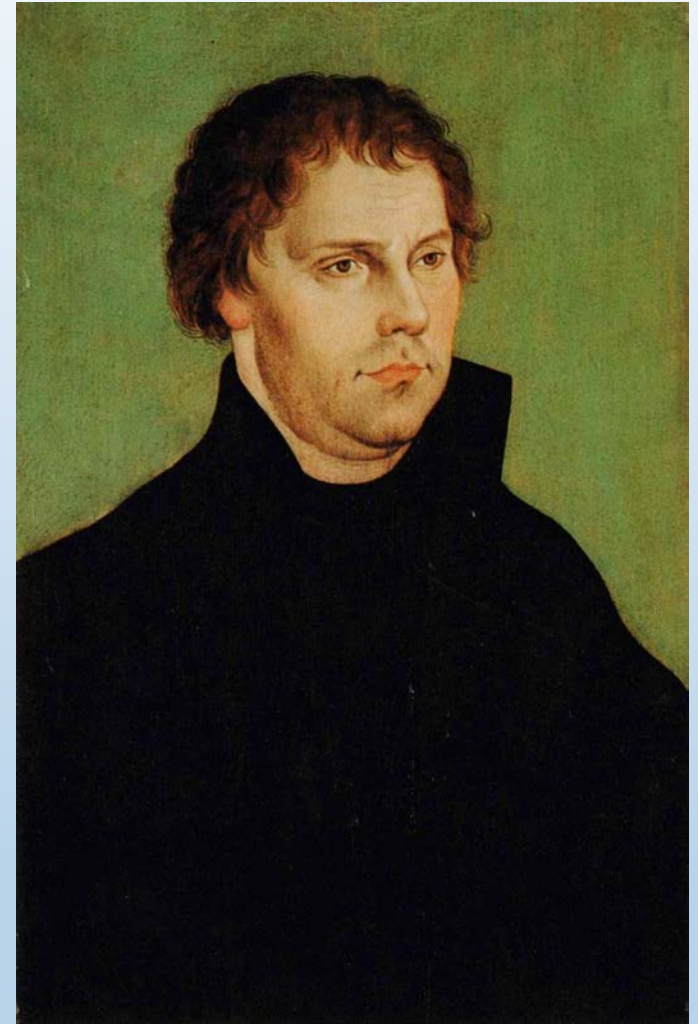
God is always doing what is the best for His children. As He knows things in advance, He uses His love and goodness to reach the heart of His people, while fully respecting their free will.





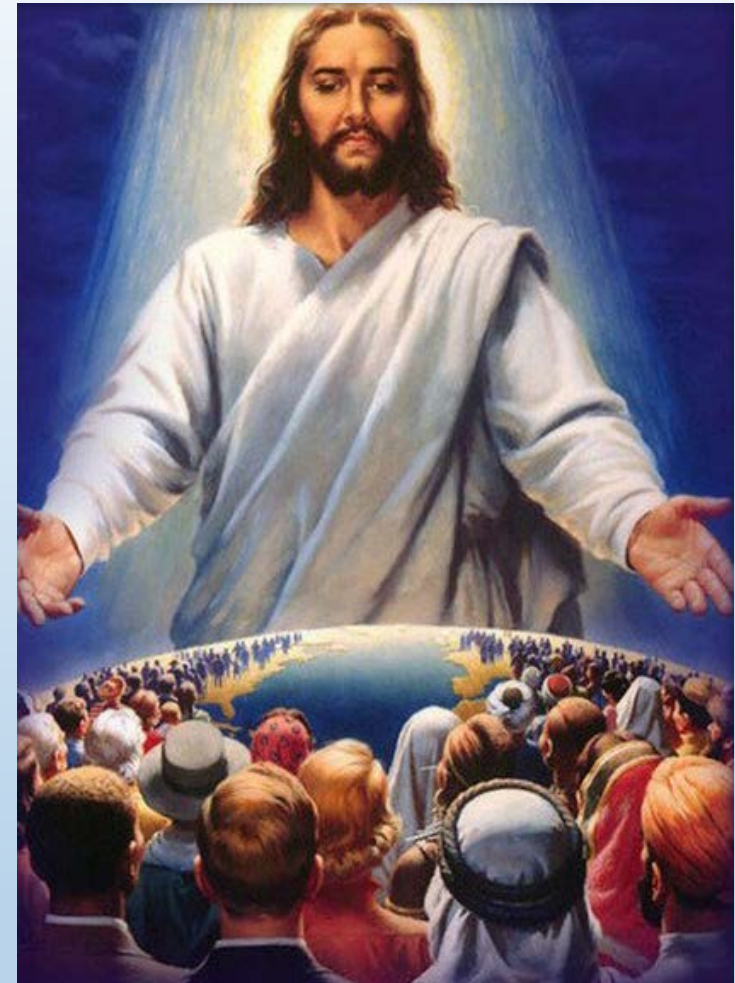
“That is what reason can neither grasp nor endure, and what has offended all these men of outstanding talent who have been so received for so many centuries. Here they demand that God should act according to human justice, and do what seems right to them or else cease to be God.”

Martin Luther. The Bondage of the Will



“Wonderful possibilities are provided for everyone who has faith in Christ. No walls are built to keep any living soul from salvation. The predestination, or election, of which God speaks, includes all who will accept Christ as a personal Saviour, who will return to their loyalty, to perfect obedience to all God’s commandments.”

Ellen G. White, The Gospel Herald, June 11, 1902, par. 3.



“You would not necessarily compel a man to sin by foreknowing his sin. Your foreknowledge would not be the cause of his sin, though undoubtedly he would sin; otherwise you would not foreknow that this would happen. Therefore these two are not contradictory, your foreknowledge and someone else’s free act. So too God compels no one to sin, though He foresees those who will sin by their own will.”

Augustine



“To pronounce the name of Jesus Christ means to acknowledge that we are cared for, that we are not lost. Jesus Christ is man’s salvation in all circumstances and in face of all that darkens his life, including the evil that proceeds from himself. There is nothing which is not already made good in this happening, that God became man for our good. Anything that is left can be no more than the discovery of this fact. We do not exist in any kind of gloomy uncertainty; we exist through the God who was gracious to us before we existed at all. It may be true that we exist in contradiction to this God, that we live in remoteness from Him, indeed in hostility to Him. It is still truer that God has prepared reconciliation for us, before we entered the struggle against Him. And true though it may be that in connection with our alienation from God man can only be regarded as a lost being, it is still much truer that God has so acted for our good, does it and will also act, that there exists a salvation for every lost condition. It is this faith that we are called to belief through the Christian Church and in the Holy Spirit.” — Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, page 71.

“For if it is predetermined  
that this man will be good,  
and this other man will be  
evil, neither is the first one  
meritorious nor the latter  
man to be blamed...”  
Justin Martyr





"It is inconceivable that the God who gives Himself in His Son to save us, should have created some people ordained to evil and damnation. There can only be one predestination to salvation. In and through Jesus Christ all people are predestined to be saved."

Jacques Ellul



"Our conformity to Christ is the sacred object of Predestination. Into predestination itself I will not now pry. The deeper things shall be left with God. I think it was Bishop Hall who once said, "I thank God I am not of his counsels, but I am of his court." If I cannot understand I will not question, for I am not his counsellor, but I will adore and obey, for I am his servant."  
Charles Spurgeon



# II. Context





Our text belongs to the Apostle Paul's presentation regarding the destiny of the Jewish people. The author reminds us that all, Jews and Gentiles, have the same privilege of being included as members of God's people. It is not the genetic code or ethnic background who qualifies someone to be part of God's kingdom. Jesus qualifies us to live with Him during eternity.





# Epistle of Romans, chapter 9 - 11

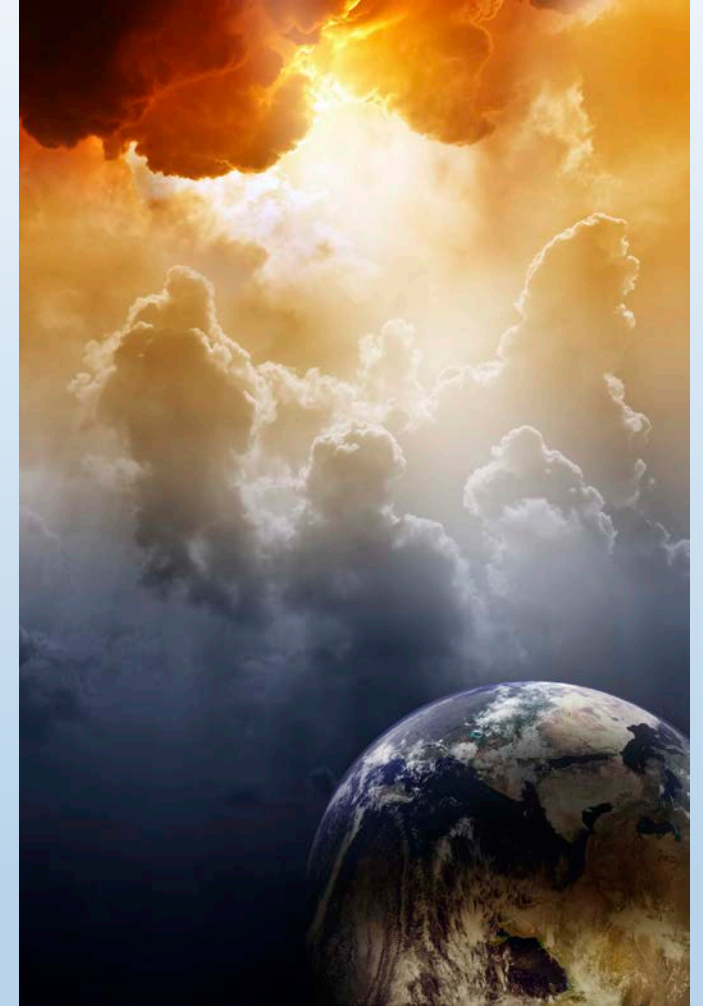
A	1 - 5	Paul's Suffering
B	6 - 29	Remnant through Mercy. Hardening of Israel
C	9: 30 – 10: 21	Faith and Righteousness
B'	11: 1 - 32	Remnant through Mercy. Hardening of Israel
A'	11: 33 - 36	Paul's Celebration (Doxology)

III. God's foreknowledge is always favourable to those who surrender in his compassionate and loving hands

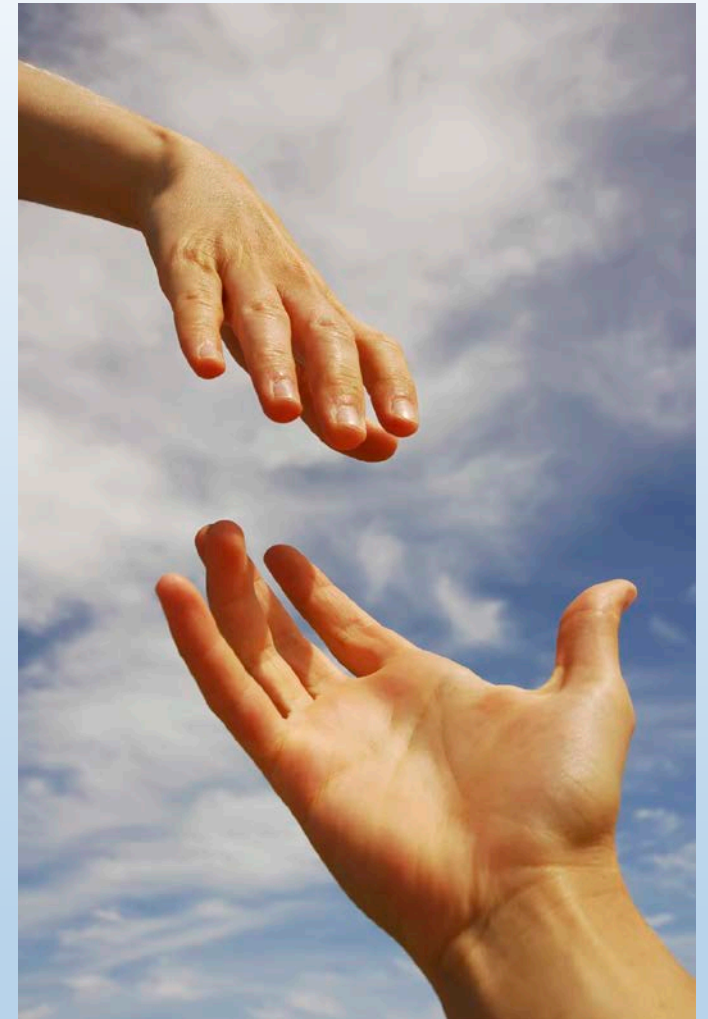


1. The power of God over His creatures is unlimited.

“Does not the potter have power over the clay”

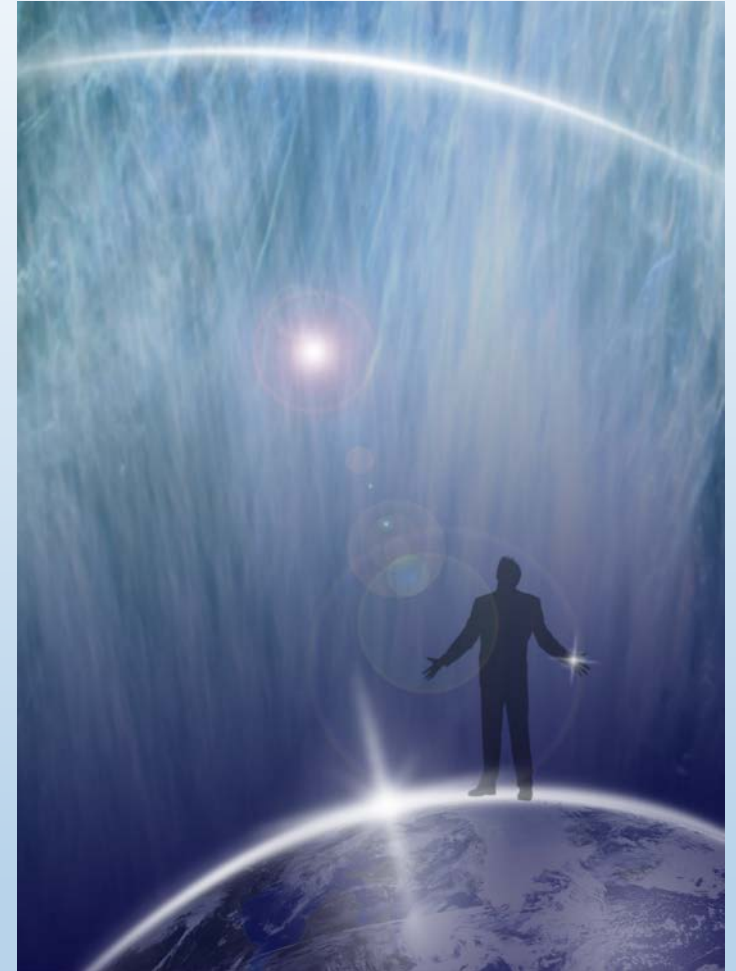


"All that God requires of us is an  
opportunity to show what He can do."  
*A.B. Simpson*

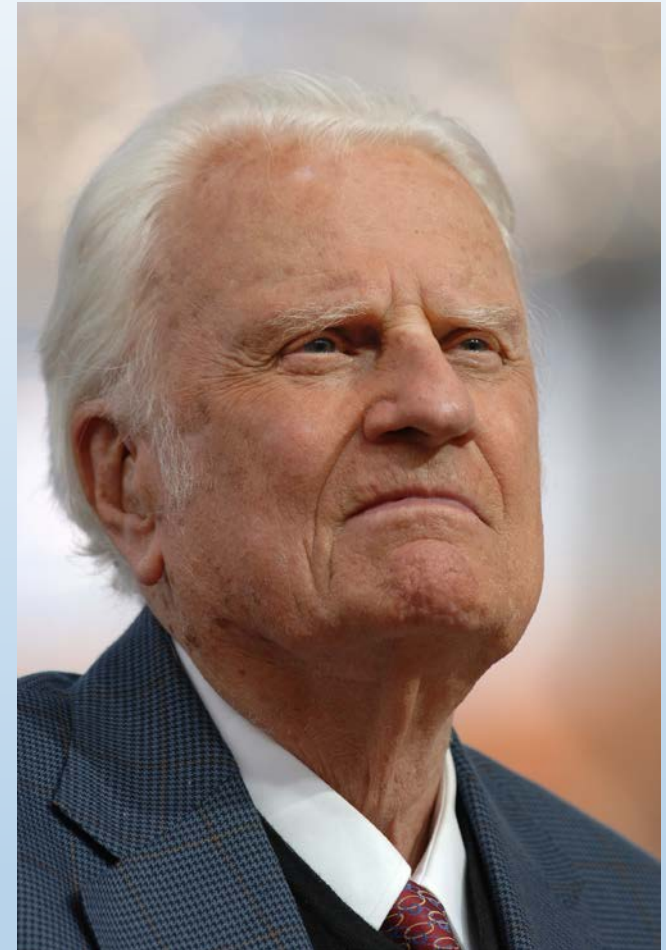




“Most Christians salute the sovereignty of  
God but believe in the sovereignty of man.”  
R.C. Sproul



“Learn to take sin seriously. Be on guard against it and resist its tug, fight its power. But most of all, learn to take the Holy Spirit seriously, calling of Him to help you overcome sin’s power and live a holy and godly life.”  
Billy Graham



2. God is not limited by  
the quality of the clay  
“from the same lump”



"God comes in where my  
helplessness begins."  
Oswald Chambers





“You are without power. The enemy is a strong power, but God has all power. Therefore come with your utter lack of power to Him who as the Almighty has eternal abundance of power, and you will be able to conquer the enemy’s strong power.”  
Erich Sauer



“God accepts those who crucify self, and makes them vessels unto honor. They are in His hands as clay in the hands of the potter, and He works His will through them. Such men and women receive spiritual power. Christ lives in them, and the power of His Spirit attends their efforts. They realize that they are to live in this world the life that Jesus lived—a life free from all selfishness; and He enables them to bear witness for Him that draws souls to the cross of Calvary.”  
Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*,  
April 9, 1902.



3. God wants to make us according to the maximum of the potential of His plan, according to the image of His son Jesus Christ  
"To make one vessel for honor"



"Oh, how much the workers need the spirit of Jesus to change and fashion them as clay is molded in the hands of the potter! When they have this spirit, there will be no spirit of variance among them; no one will be so narrow as to want everything done his way, according to his ideas; there will be no inharmonious feeling between him and his brother laborers who do not come up to his standard. The Lord does not want any of His children to be shadows of others; but He would have each one be his own simple self, refined, sanctified, ennobled by imitating the life and character of the great Pattern. The narrow, shut-in, exclusive spirit which keeps everything within the compass of one's self has been a curse to the cause of God and always will be wherever allowed to exist."

Ellen G. White, The Review and Herald, April 13, 1886.



"Our lives are a masterpiece, and God is our Master Sculptor. God starts with crude non-distinguishable chunks of clay and begins to mold us with love and care from His Son. He begins working His grace in our lives and slowly creates the form that resembles a work of art in human form."  
Darrell Cresswell



"We're all diamonds in the rough until God gets His hands on us".

R. Alan Woods



4. For those who refuse His plan, God in His sovereignty is free to act according to His omniscience.

"And another for dishonor?"



"How repugnant to every emotion of love and mercy, and even to our sense of justice, is the doctrine that the wicked dead are tormented with fire and brimstone in an eternally burning hell, that for the sins of a brief earthly life they are to suffer torture as long as God shall live. Yet this doctrine has been generally embodied in the creeds of Christendom. Says a learned doctor of divinity: "The sight of hell-torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever." Another uses these words: "While the decree of reprobation is eternally executing on the vessels of wrath, the smoke of their torment will be eternally ascending in view of the vessels of mercy, who, instead of taking the part of these miserable objects, will say, Amen, Alleluia! praise ye the Lord!" Where in the pages of God's word are such sentiments expressed? Those who present them may be learned and even honest men; but they are deluded by the sophistry of Satan. He leads them to misconstrue strong expressions of Scripture, giving to the language the coloring of bitterness and malignity which pertains to himself, but not to our Creator." Ellen G. White, Spirit of Prophecy, v. 4. p. 355.



Our destiny is not fixed before the foundation of the world. God's omniscience knows our decisions in advance. But our destiny depends on our free acceptance of God's plan for our life:

"Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work."  
2 Timothy 2: 21.



"Purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the Lord." God's clean message demands clean messengers! Our only safety is to stay completely off Satan's enchanted ground—to nip in the bud any tendency that might ultimately lead us into compromise and fall.

"Abstain from all appearance of evil," Paul admonishes (1 Thess. 5:22). "Shrink from it and keep aloof from it—in whatever form or whatever kind it may be" (Amplified). Our safety is to "steer clear of evil in any form" (Phillips)."

Robert H. Pierson



By resistance we become the vessels of dishonor. By surrendering to God we allow Him to mold us according to the stature of Jesus Christ

“We must have more than an intellectual belief in the truth. Many of the Jews were convinced that Jesus was the Son of God, but they were too proud and ambitious to surrender. They decided to resist the truth, and they maintained their opposition. They did not receive into the heart the truth as it is in Jesus. When truth is held as truth only by the conscience, when the heart is not stimulated and made receptive, only the mind is affected. But when the truth is received as truth by the heart, it has passed through the conscience, and has captivated the soul with its pure principles. It is placed in the heart by the Holy Spirit, who reveals its beauty to the mind, that its transforming power may be seen in the character.”  
Ellen G. White, The Review and Herald, February 14, 1899.

# V. Conclusion





"The mysterious providence which our shortsighted vision would lament is designed by God to accomplish a work that otherwise would never have been done."

Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles, p. 465.



“The safest place to be is in  
the center of God’s will.”  
Corrie Ten Boon



“God didn’t predetermine the evil actions of God’s enemies, but the suffering of His Son in their hands. God doesn’t have to move people to do evil, because it’s natural for sinners to practice evil. Yet He uses even their evil to further His plan of salvation... Predestination, based on His foreknowledge, once put into effect reaches us as a call for salvation. The acceptance of the call leads to justification and to our final glorification at the Second Coming (verse 30). There is no power on earth that can alter God’s plan for us except our rejection of it.”  
Angel Rodriguez



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