

The background image shows a scenic coastal area. A winding road follows the curve of a fjord or bay. The water is dark and reflects the light from a bright, cloudy sky. In the foreground, there's a grassy, rocky hillside. The overall atmosphere is dramatic and somewhat somber.

# Vessels of Mercy

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## 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)

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



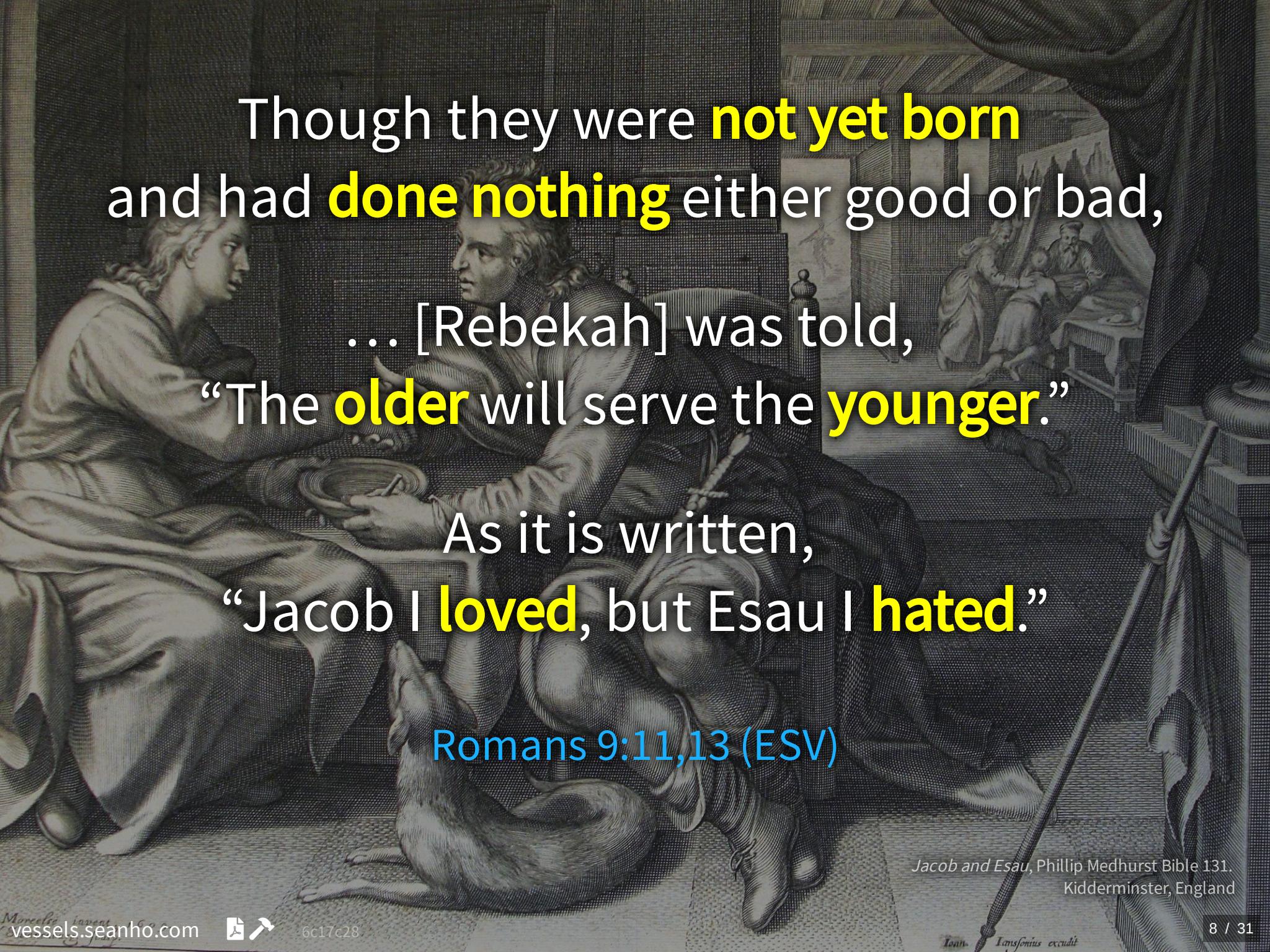
Though they were **not yet born**  
and had **done nothing** either good or bad,

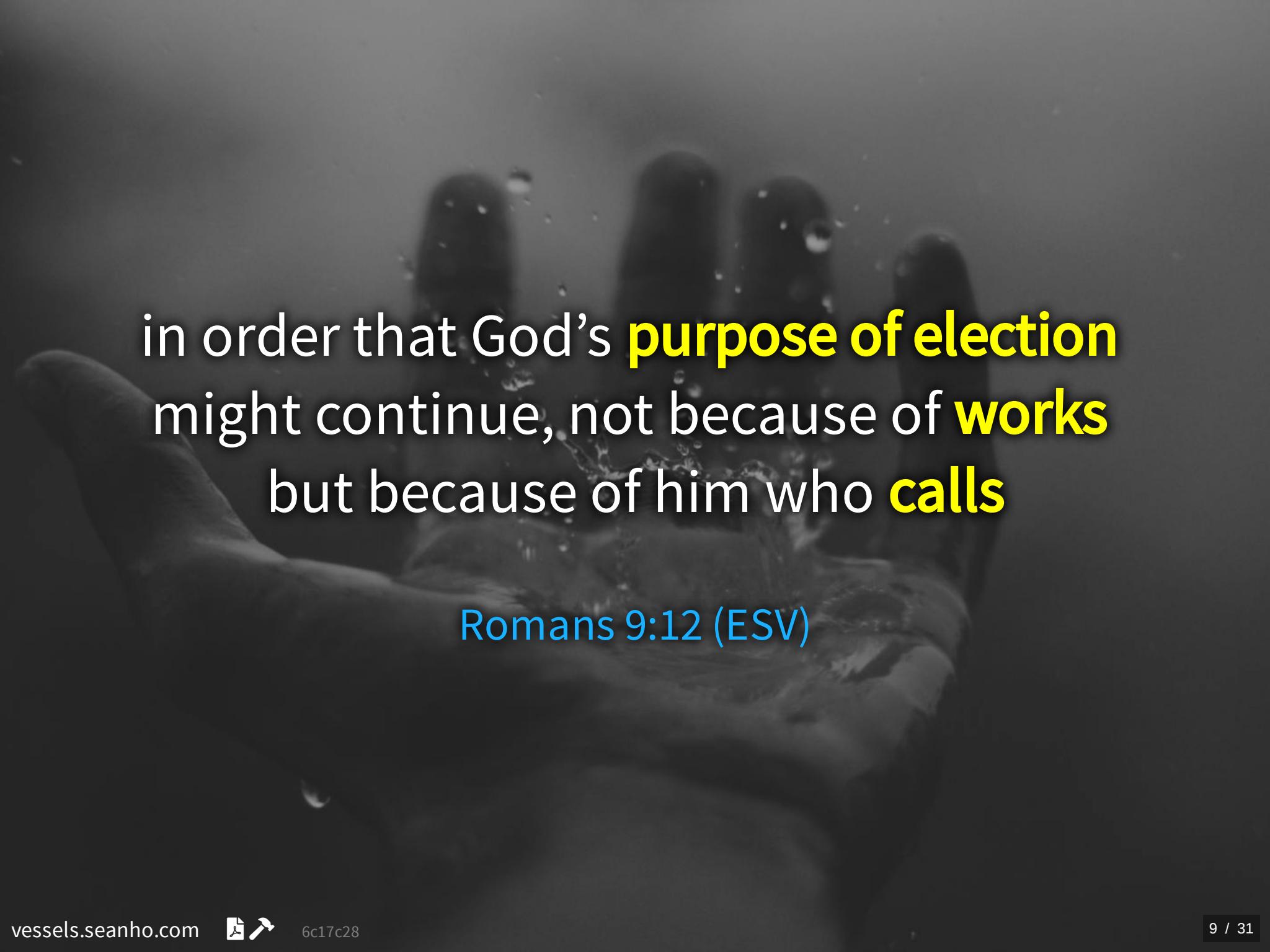
... [Rebekah] was told,  
“The **older** will serve the **younger**.”

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

Romans 9:11,13 (ESV)

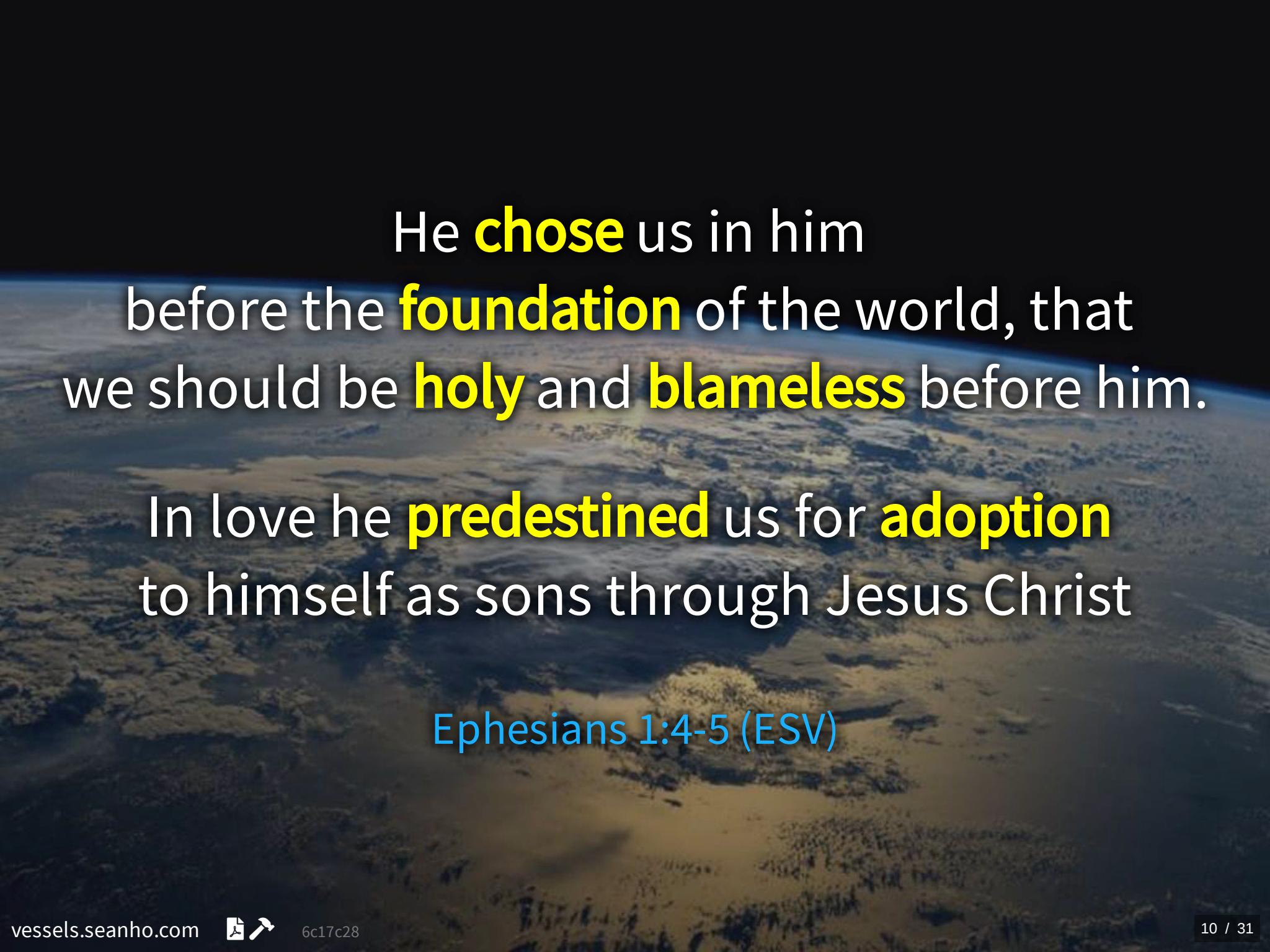
Jacob and Esau, Phillip Medhurst Bible 131.  
Kidderminster, England





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

Romans 9:12 (ESV)

A dark, semi-transparent background image showing an aerial view of a rural landscape with rolling hills, fields, and a winding road or riverbed.

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)

A photograph of a dirt path winding through a dense forest. The path is surrounded by tall trees and lush green undergrowth. The lighting suggests a bright day.

**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:

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- 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)

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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)

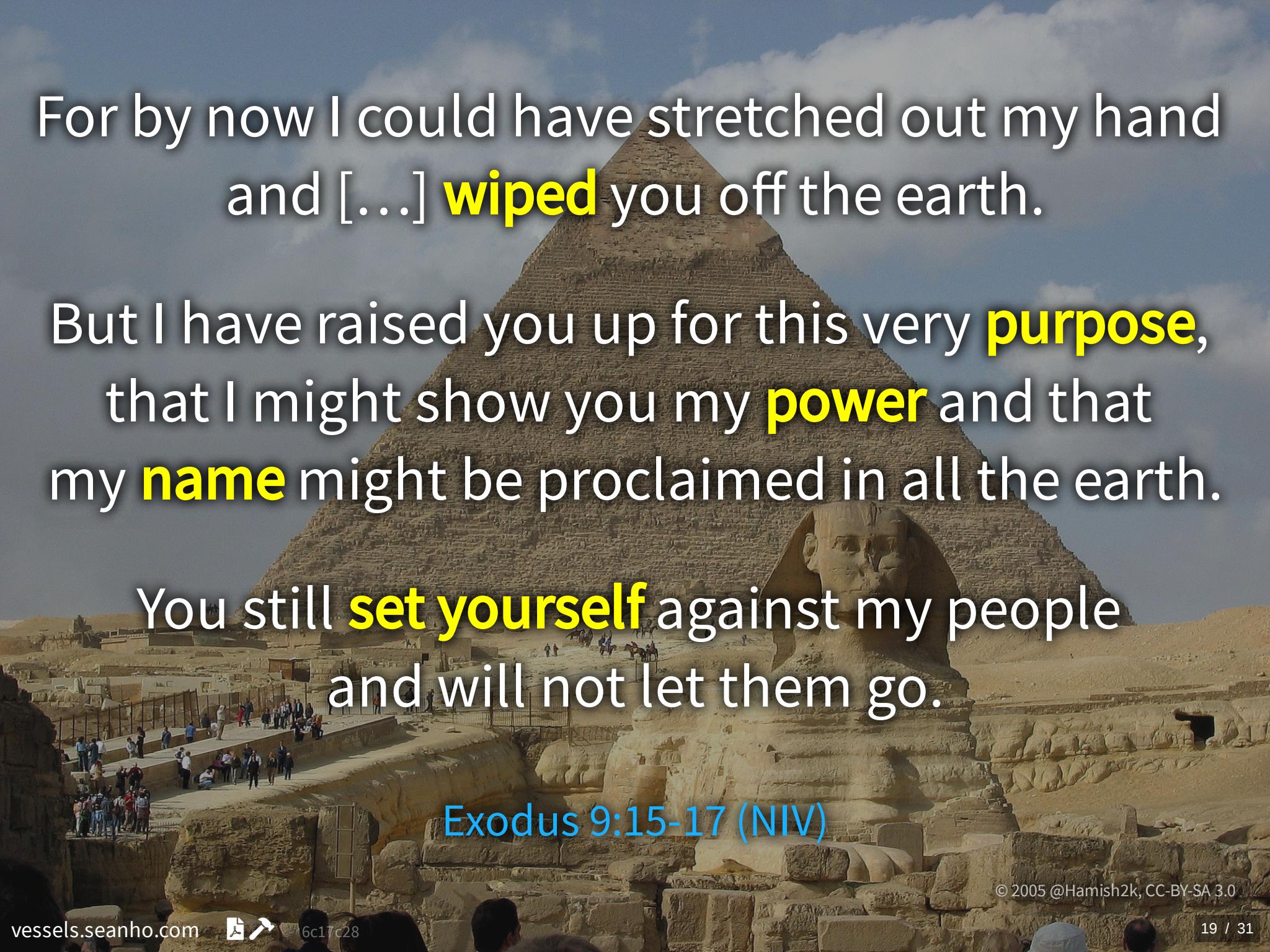
# Theodicy (Is God Just?)

- 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 ⇒⇐ God's sovereignty
- World is a school (e.g., Irenaeus, Origien)
  - Suffering necessary for human growth
  - (Swinburne): free will ⇒ 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)

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

# Vessels of Mercy (Rom9)

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

A photograph of a person from behind, standing in a field of tall, golden grass. They are wearing a dark t-shirt and have their arms raised wide, palms facing forward. In the background, there's a dense line of trees on a slight incline under a clear sky.

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

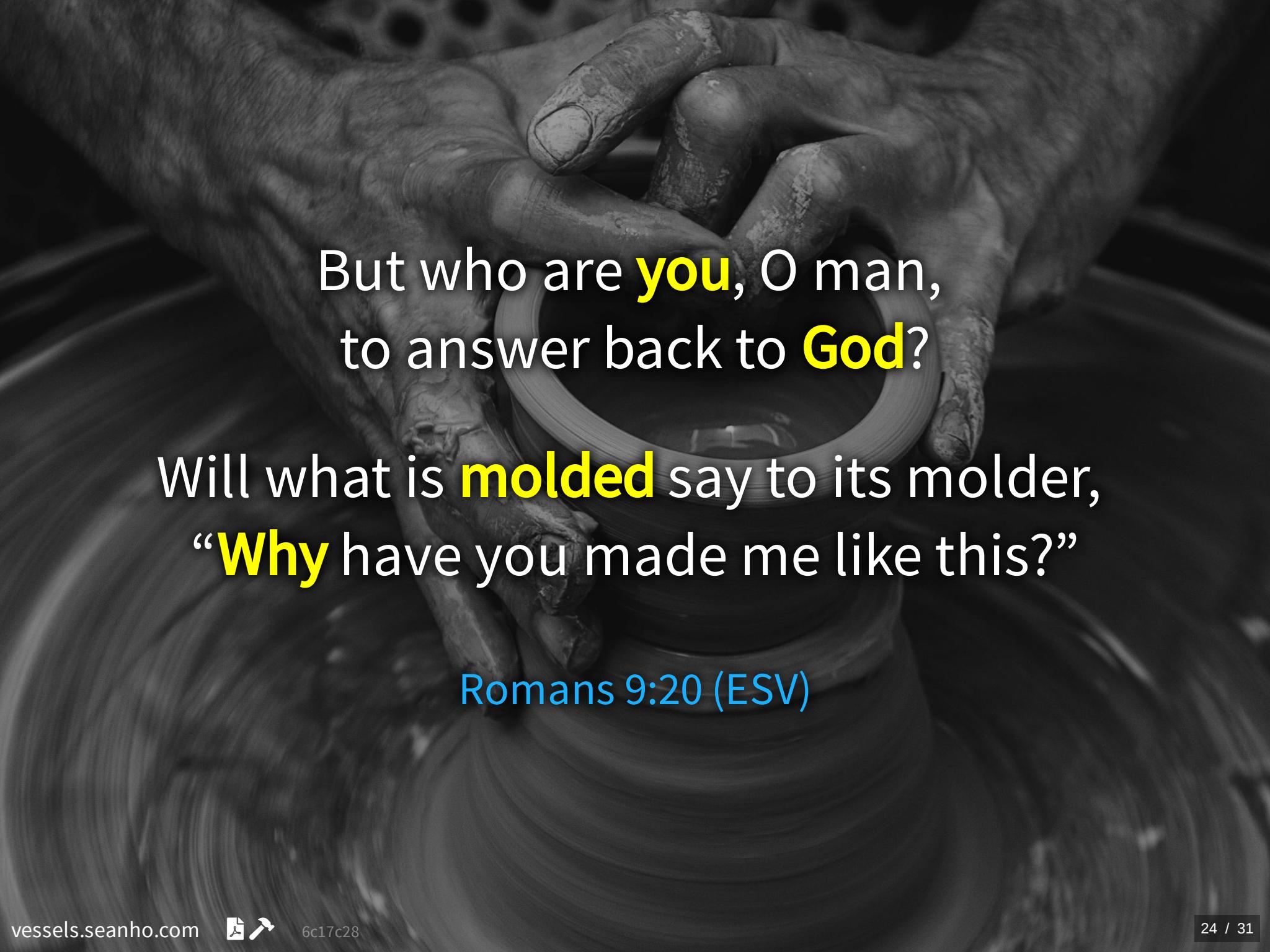
Romans 9:19 (ESV)

# Self-Actualisation vs. Self-Governance

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Maslow's  
Hierarchy

A black and white photograph showing a close-up of hands working on a pottery wheel. The hands are covered in clay, and they are shaping a large, roughly spherical piece of clay. The background is dark and out of focus.

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**.

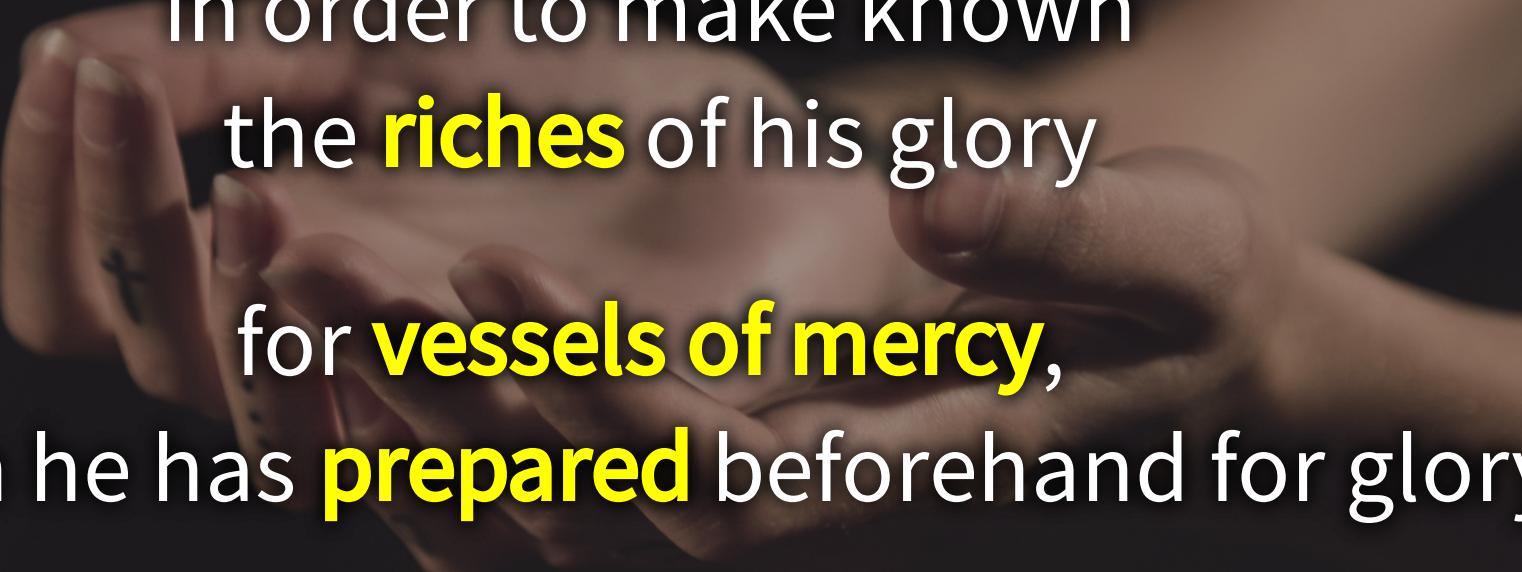
What **fruit** did you have then  
in the things of which you are now **ashamed**?  
For the end of those things is **death**.

Romans 6:20-21 (NKJV)

The background of the slide is a dark, moody landscape featuring a lighthouse on a small island in the distance. The sky is filled with heavy, dark clouds, creating a somber and contemplative atmosphere.

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

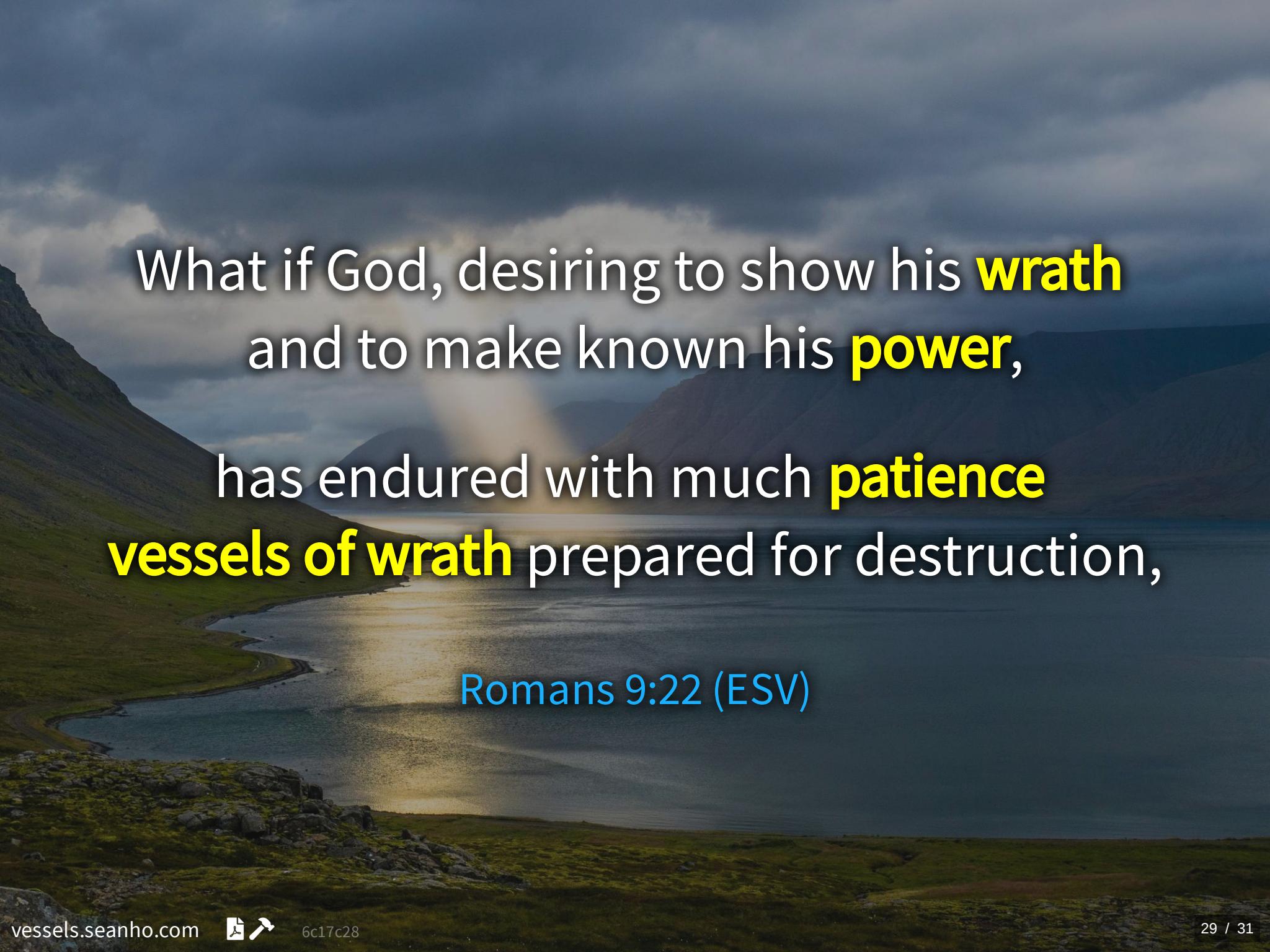
Romans 9:22 (ESV)



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

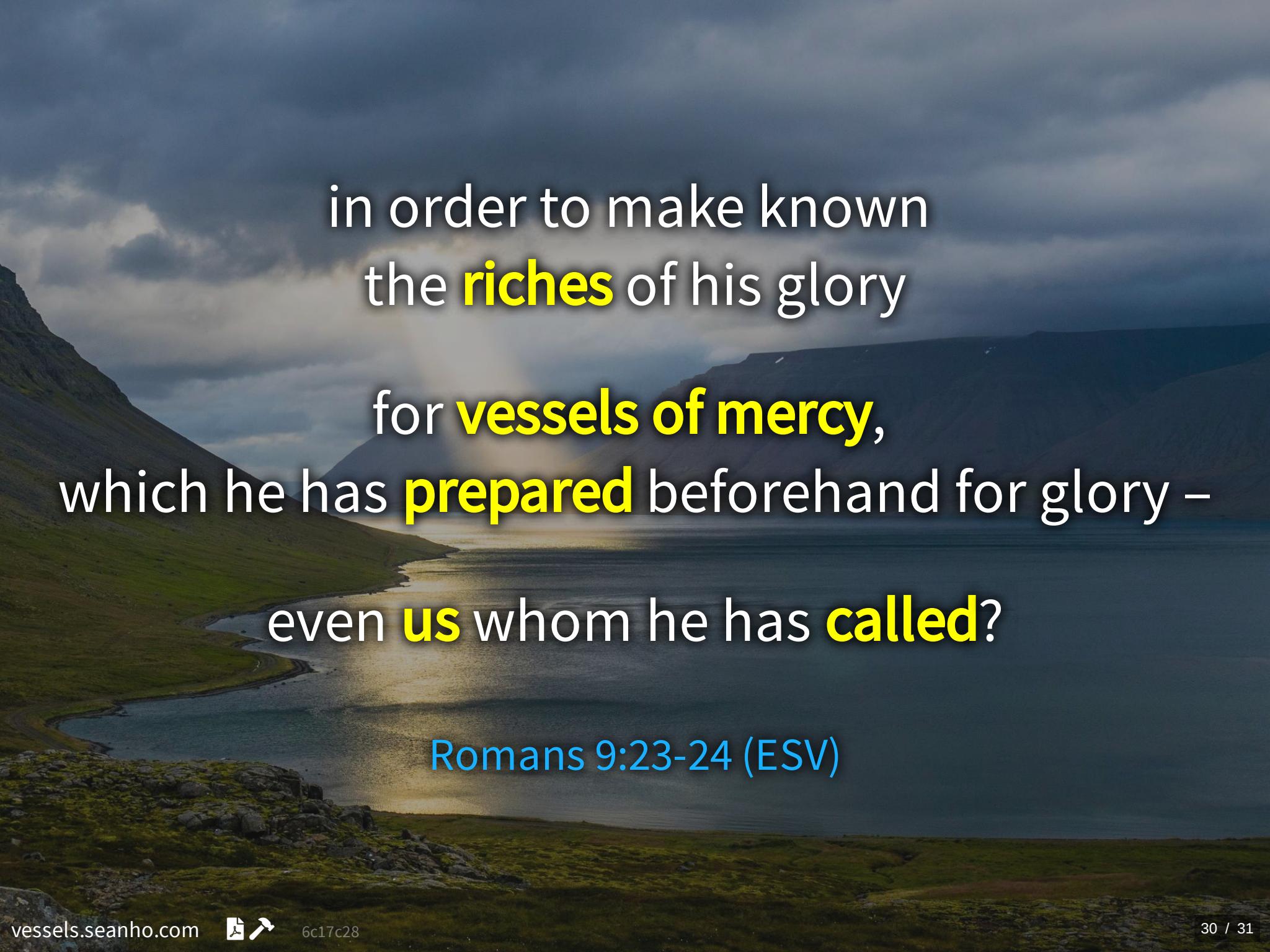
Romans 9:23 (ESV)

Can I choose  
my own purpose  
and destiny?

A wide-angle photograph of a rugged landscape under a heavy, dark sky. A river or lake curves through the center of the frame, reflecting the light from a low sun. In the background, dark, craggy mountains rise against the horizon. The foreground is a mix of green grass and rocky terrain.

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)

A wide-angle photograph of a natural landscape. In the foreground, there's a mix of dark, rocky ground and patches of green grass. A river or lake curves through the center of the frame, its surface reflecting the light. The background features several layers of hills and mountains, with the sky above being a mix of dark, heavy clouds and lighter areas where sunlight is breaking through.

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)

