

The Gospel Difference

Or

THE DIFFERENCE

BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY & “FREE-WILL” COUNTERFEITS
WITH COMMON OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

*By Means of a Fictional Dialogue
Between an Arminian and a Christian*

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The following originally consisted of separate lists of passages designed to aid in memorization; thus, a large percentage of the document is made up of biblical quotes. These lists were often separate projects, grouped by subject, with their own explanatory notes. Many of the notes started to take the form of a dialogue and over time I combined them into what it is now. Since each section builds upon the previous, the document is best read in page order. The article does not cover all of the “gospel” arguments made by Arminians but it does cover those that I have most commonly encountered over the years.

Some of the quotes are repeated in various sections. Although such repetition is aimed at furthering familiarity and memorization there is another more important reason. Many of the relevant passages flow in one large context but cover numerous key points. I repeat these passages in their entirety to keep the context; however, I often underline them differently to highlight their relevance to each of the particular sections. It would be a mistake to view such repetition as mere padding and to pass over the quotes (given their richness and depth of applicability).

Again, the original design was that of a learning tool and that is what it remains. I do not believe it will convince anyone of the Truth unless God Himself does the work of convincing and convicting. Moreover, there are many works that can be freely downloaded or purchased that cover the same biblical ground more thoroughly. Nonetheless, I hope that it will be an aid to both witness and study.

At this point, the dialogue begins with...

The Arminian: You were discussing the Bible with someone the other day but I couldn't quite make out what you believe. Do you believe the gospel?

The Christian: Can you tell me what you mean by the Gospel? I want to be clear before answering.

The Arminian: The gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It is the good news of salvation for all who repent and believe... for all who accept Jesus into their heart. Jesus loves everyone and died for everyone and wants all to be saved. This is why it is so important to share the word and to encourage others to accept his offer and to make a decision for him.

The Christian: I do not believe in such a gospel; it is in opposition to the sovereignty and glory of God. Moreover, it runs contrary to the entire testimony of scripture and gives sinners a false hope in a false refuge. It is what many call *easy-“join-up”-ism*. Moreover, you used language from **1 Corinthians**

15:3-4; however, you left out those vital words: *according to the scriptures*. If one's gospel is not *according to the scriptures*, then it is no Gospel at all as per **Galatians 1:6-9**.

The Arminian: That's a strong charge; why don't you tell me your definition of the gospel.

The Christian: Firstly, let me start by stating that I believe in one God – *God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* (with each of the three *Divine Persons* of the *Triune Godhead* being equally and fully divine in their nature and essence. In other words, all three *Divine Persons* subsist eternally as the *One True God* and each can be identified as God though they are One). I state this because many groups, like the so-called Jehovah Witnesses, Oneness Pentecostals, Mormons, Muslims, Jews, etc. deny this.

Secondly, I believe in the Good News of the *finished* work of Christ on the cross for all of His people. The entirety of the Bible affirms that Christ performed everything necessary for the atonement, redemption, justification, and sanctification of His spiritual family whilst on the cross.

Thirdly, I believe that God ordained both everything in this world and everything *that happens* in this world to further His glory and the good of His people. This includes the election and predestination of all whom He planned to save. Before the world was, the Father elected a people for His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ:

- The Father (having willed, purposed, decreed, and ordained *all things*) chose them *in* Christ from before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4, 1 Peter 1:2) and covenanted with the Lord to give them to Him as an elect bride and church (John 6:37). The Father is the giver of every *good* and *perfect* gift; He gave the elect His Son (the Good Shepherd) and He gave His son the elect (who were made perfect in Him who is Perfect).
- Likewise in eternity, before the ordained fall of man, the Son covenanted with the Father to save the elect from their sins and from the fiery wrath due those sins. This is why He is the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world* (Revelation 13:8 and 1 Peter 1:19-20). What was ordained from eternity was carried out by Christ *in time* as He (a) became incarnate (becoming fully human whilst remaining fully God); (b) kept the Mosaic law perfectly; (c) was made sin for His people (i.e. as He took upon Himself their sin and the fierce judgment due it); (d) died in their stead on the cross; and (e) rose again the third day *according to the scriptures* — evidencing that He had completely satisfied the demands of the law and established an everlasting righteousness for His people.
- The Holy Spirit eternally covenanted with the Father and Son to make the salvific work of Christ *effectual*, in time, in the hearts of God's people. It is by the Spirit that the Father draws His family. It is by the Spirit that the Son calls and quickens the elect (through His holy word the Bible, and particularly, through the Gospel). The Holy Spirit regenerates, converts, teaches, guides, and otherwise effectually works within the people of God to bring about their spiritual growth in this life (whilst sealing them unto eternal glory in the life to come).

At the Father's appointed time for each of the elect, every one of them will hear the Gospel truth; He will give them spiritual ears to hear. He will send the Holy Spirit to them to convict them of sin, righteousness, and judgment. The Spirit of God will quicken and convert them and bear fruit in them. God does *everything* necessary for the salvation of His elect; no aspect of their character and conduct, no exercise of their fallen will or intent, and nothing else that originates from carnal man plays any part in initiating their salvation or keeping them saved. Every member of God's spiritual family will be saved, not one of them will be lost, and they will be saved *wholly* by the combined work of God alone – for “*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Which He shed on us abundantly through*

Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:5-7). The quickened elect thank God for these precious truths.

Finally, the same cannot be said for those outside of Christ; that is, for those who were never chosen in Him from eternity and whose names were never written in the Lamb’s book of life. They reject and despise the blessed election of God. They are His eternal enemies and are (even now) under His everlasting wrath, hatred, and judgment.

The Arminian: Well, you’ve said a mouthful and I’m not sure where to begin but I will say this: despite your last claim, *God is love* and he does not hate anyone. He hates the sin but loves the sinner.

The Christian: Although God *is* Love, He is also *Righteous* and therefore He justly hates not only the sin but the sinner also *if* that sinner is outside of Christ. God is eternal and operates from eternity. Those whom He loves He loves from everlasting to everlasting; both in time and outside of time. Those whom He hates He hates from everlasting to everlasting; both in time and outside of time.

- **Romans 9:11-13** (For [the children] being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.
- **Psalms 5:5-6** The foolish shall not stand in [Thy] sight: [Thou] hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: 6 the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.
- **Psalms 11:5** The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence His soul hateth.
- **Psalms 10:3** For the wicked boasteth of His heart’s desire, and blesseth the covetous, [whom] the LORD abhorreth.
- **Psalms 53:5** There were they in great fear, [where] no fear was: for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth [against] thee: thou hast put [them] to shame, because God hath despised them.
- **Leviticus 26:30** And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcases upon the carcases of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.
- **Leviticus 20:23** And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.
- **Proverbs 11:20** They that are of a froward heart [are] abomination to the LORD: but [such as are] upright in [their] way [are] his delight.
- **Proverbs 16:5** Every one [that is] proud in heart [is] an abomination to the LORD: [though] hand [join] in hand, he shall not be unpunished.
- **Proverbs 17:15** He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both [are] abomination to the LORD.
- **Psalms 26:5** I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.
- **Proverbs 22:14** The mouth of strange women [is] a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the LORD shall fall therein.
- **Psalms 31:5-6** Into thine hand I commit my spirit [see Luke 23:46]: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth. 6 I have hated them that regard lying vanities; but I trust in the LORD.

- **Psalm 139:21-22** Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? 22 I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.

The Arminian: You are either accidentally misconstruing these “hate” verses or else outright twisting them. The Bible is clear that God loves *everyone* born into this world.

The Christian: The above verses are clear to everyone who has ears to hear them. They are clear in their teaching that God hates the wicked. As the verses below will evidence, the Lord only loves the righteous. He only loves *the called*, those who were chosen in Christ from eternity (which are the elect, His spiritual church, people, nation, bride, children, sheep...). The Father pours out His everlasting love upon Christ. The Christian, being in Christ, is the equal recipient of that love:

- **Romans 8:38-39** For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- **Ephesians 1:4** According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:
- **Psalm 146:8** The LORD openeth [the eyes of] the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous:
- **Ephesians 2:4-7** But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit together in heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in [his] kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.
- **1 John 4:19** We love him, because He first loved us.
- **John 14:21-23** He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him... 23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.
- **John 16:27** For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.
- **Proverbs 15:9** The way of the wicked [is] an abomination unto the LORD: but He loveth him that followeth after righteousness.
- **Proverbs 8:17** I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.
 - [Again...] **1 John 4:19** We love him, because He first loved us.
- **John 14:23** Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.
- **Revelation 3:19** As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.
- **Proverbs 3:12** For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son [in whom] he delighteth.
 - **1 Corinthians 11:32** But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.
- **Hebrew 12:5-8** And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

- **Deuteronomy 33:3** Yea, he loved the people; all his saints [are] in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; [every one] shall receive of thy words.
- **John 17:6-10, 20-23** I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. 7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. 8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received [them], and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. 9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. 10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them... 20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

The Arminian: When god speaks of loving the righteous, He means that he loves them more than he loves the wicked. However, when he uses language like *hate, abhor, loathe, etc.*, he isn't being literal; he is simply stating that he loves these people less... but he still loves them and causes the sun to shine upon them.

The Christian: When God states that He hates, abhors, and loathes, the wicked, He means it. Throughout the Bible His expression of love is *only* towards Christ and the elect in Him; thus, we can rest assured that He has no love for those outside of the Lord Jesus. Just as His people were *eternally chosen in Christ (Ephesians 1:4)* the wicked have been *eternally excluded from Him* (the Lord *never* knew them. He didn't know them for a season and then decide to forget them...He *never* knew them). Thus, His righteous hatred towards them is not limited to some future time but is expressed in the present, in the here and now, just as His language of love is towards His people (as the verb tenses in the passages evidence).

Also, it is true that God causes the rain to fall and the sun to shine upon the non-elect but this is a necessary part of Him working all things together for the specific good of His people. The wicked benefit from the presence of the *saints* for the rain must fall and the sun must shine upon *them* for His name and glory's sake. To suggest that such temporal benefits upon the reprobate are a form of divine love and/or blessing would be like arguing that the fattening of lambs for slaughter is likewise a show of love and blessing towards the lambs (see **James 5:1-6** and **Psalm 73**). When God gives temporal benefits to the non-elect, judgment is built up for them as their lack of love, thanksgiving, repentance, and good stewardship further serves to engender the wrath of God against them.

As for the argument that these words of *divine* hatred and disgust are not meant to be taken literally, consider the very nature of them. One would need to utterly overthrow the clear English and Hebrew definitions to make them mean something other than *hate, abhor, loathe, etc.* It would be foolish to argue that their contextual meaning is simply that of "loving some less than others but still loving them." The following definitions are for words taken from the *hate* verses above:

- **Sane'** – H8130 – שָׂנֵא (sä·nā'): to hate, be hateful (hate, hatest, hateth).
- **Ta'ab** – H8581 – תָּאַב (tä·av'): to loathe, abhor, detest, regard as an abomination.

- **Na'ats** – H5006 – נָאַץ (nā·ats'): to deride, despise, reject with contempt and derision, spurn, contemn, abhor.
- **Ga'al** – H1602 – גָּאַל (gā·al'): to abhor, loathe, be vilely cast away, to reject with loathing.
- **Ma'ac** – H3988 – מָאַץ (mā·as'): to despise, contemn, reject, refuse, abhor
- **Tow'ebah** – H8441 – תוֹעֵבָה (tō·ā·vā'): a disgusting thing, abomination, abominable

As further proof that these words mean what they mean, consider what the Lord Jesus stated about the wicked in the verses below and question again whether these verses sound like He just “loves the wicked less than others... but still loves them”

- **Psalm 2:9** Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.
- **Psalm 21:8-9** Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee. 9 Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the LORD shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.
- **Psalm 58:3, 6-7** The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies... 6 Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD. 7 Let them melt away as waters [which] run continually: [when] he bendeth [his bow to shoot] his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces.
- **Psalm 89:23** And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him.
- **Proverb 1:24-31** Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; 25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; 27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. 28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: 29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: 30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. 31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.
- **Psalm 2:4-5** He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. 5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.
- **Psalm 53:5** There were they in great fear, [where] no fear was: for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth [against] thee: thou hast put [them] to shame, because God hath despised them.
- **Psalm 59:8** But thou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.

Since you say that god loves everyone, do you really think he laughs at the calamity, destruction, and vexation of those whom he *loves*? Do you seriously believe that the true God speaks in language akin to “I love you but I am going to dash you into pieces and throw you into Hell for all of eternity?” Can you imagine reading a passage like **2 Peter 2:4-9** and follow it up with “but I know Jesus loves them anyway and *wishes* that he could have saved them if they would have just *let* him.” I cannot imagine such foolishness because the Bible assures me that God *never* sends those whom He loves to Hell and never *wishes* that He could have saved anyone. All whom He wished to save He saved in Christ. Moreover, no aspect of salvation is ever about man *letting* or *not letting* God do anything for God is sovereign over *all*. A “let” god is nothing more than a genie set free from a bottle.

The Arminian: Please do not put words in my mouth. I never said that god loves those who are in Hell. Clearly there comes a point after a person rejects, and rejects, and rejects the love of god that god stops loving them... but that doesn't mean that god did not love them at *some point* in their lives!

The Christian: If you argue that God stops loving people at some point, then you should admit that the "hate, loathe, abhor..." verses above do not mean *to love less* and must literally mean to hate, loathe, and abhor (even if it is just "at some point in or after their lives" as you claim). More importantly, if the god of free-will religion can love someone at one point and then cease to love them at another, that god is *mutable*; a mutable god is no God at all, it is just an idol. The true God and Saviour is absolutely *immutable*. He is perfect at all times; thus, He cannot change. He is the same *yesterday, today, and tomorrow*; both in time and in eternity. This is one of the very reasons why the elect have such a *sure* and *solid* hope of eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Consider the following passages that pertain to the immutability of God:

- **Hebrews 6:16-20** For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation [is] to them an end of all strife. 17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed [it] by an oath: 18 That by two immutable things, in which [it was] impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19 Which [hope] we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, [even] Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.
- **James 1:17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.
- **Malachi 3:6** For I [am] the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.
- **Jeremiah 31:3** The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, [saying], Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.
- **Numbers 23:19** God [is] not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do [it]? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?
- **Hebrews 13:8** Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.
- **1 Samuel 15:29** And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he [is] not a man, that he should repent.
- **Psalms 103:17** But the mercy of the LORD [is] from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;
- **Lamentations 3:22-23** [It is of] the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. 23 [They are] new every morning: great [is] thy faithfulness.
- **Romans 8:28-32** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31 What shall we then say to these things? If God [be] for us, who [can be] against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?
- **Romans 11:29** For the gifts and calling of God [are] without repentance.

- **Philippians 1:6** Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ:
- **2 Thessalonians 2:13-16** But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. 16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given [us] everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

The True God can never cease to love the object/recipient of His love which is *Christ alone* and those who were chosen *in Him* from eternity. Remember, you cannot separate the *body of Christ* from *Christ* for Christ and the body are *one* (as per **1 Corinthians 12:12**). Therefore, those whom God loves, He loved (1) before the world *was*; (2) while the world *is*; and (3) after this corrupt world ceases *to be*. Likewise, those whom God hates, He hated (1) before the world *was*; (2) while the world *is*; and (3) after this corrupt world ceases *to be*. We see proof of this in:

- **Ecclesiastes 3:14-15** I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth [it], that [men] should fear before him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.

God's love for Christ and His people endureth forever (being from everlasting to everlasting) as does His righteous hatred toward the non-elect; for that divine love '*which hath been is now*; and that divine love *which is to be hath already been*' therefore that divine hatred which hath been is now; and that divine hatred which is to be hath already been... even from eternity.

The Arminian: No matter what verses you quote, or misquote, the Bible is clear that God loves everyone at some point in their lives. *John 3:16* states: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The Christian: John 3:16 is a blessed promise for a very *specific* group of people — the elect of God. It is not a *general offer* of salvation nor is it an *open invitation* to "accept" Jesus. As per the following, this passage simply does not mean what most people think it means:

Firstly, the "*so*" in "*God so...*" is the Greek word *Houtō* and it is not used as a *quantifier* but as a *qualifier*. It is not used in the sense of "*so* (or *sooooo*) much;" instead, it is used to denote "in this manner" or "after this fashion." When we read "God so, or in this manner, loved the world" — we have to ask: *in what manner?* **John 3:14** tells us "*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up*. In the same manner that Moses lifted up the serpent to save the physical lives of the chosen amongst Israel, God caused Christ to be lifted up (crucified) to save the elect spiritually (for they are the true, spiritual Israel pictured in the Old Testament).

Numbers 21:6-9 And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. 7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. 8 And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. 9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."

Moses didn't make "an offer" to look upon the serpent; no one was called upon to "exercise their free will to look." Those whom God ordained to look... looked and they lived. Those who were not ordained to look... did not look and they died; "*Much people of Israel died*" without a "chance" to look at the brazen serpent. Thus, this entire passage is a statement of fact to be *believed* and not a "general offer" to be *accepted*. God's elect have all been bitten by the fiery serpents of sin. Those whom God gives eyes to see their sin, and to see their need to be healed by the Lord, will look upon Christ and be saved. All of God's elect, and only God's elect, will look and live.

Secondly, what of this word *world* which is the Greek word *Kosmos*? Note that people live in *cosmopolitan* regions (orderly arrangements of the citizenry); women wear *cosmetics* (for the orderly arranging/adorning of their appearance); we exist within the *cosmos* (the orderly arrangement of the universe — the opposite of *chaos* in the Greek). *Kosmos* (our *cosmos*) simply means *orderly arrangement*, sometimes in the sense of *adorning*. To determine what has been orderly arranged, we must look to the context. God has orderly arranged everything in this world but He uses *kosmos* (or in this case, the accusative-masculine form *kosmon*) to describe such varied things as the physical world, the material things in/of the world, the wicked in the world, the elect in the world, and the entirety of mankind as a whole. Some claim that *kosmon*, because it is a masculine noun form, always means the orderly arrangement of *mankind* — but this is not true; it is used to denote orderly arrangements that do not directly relate to men and women. Therefore, to know which usage/meaning is in view, we must (1) look at the immediate context and (2) compare what is taught in that context to other passages that tie-in.

For example, **1 John 3:13** states "*Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.*" Few would read this as "Marvel not, my brethren, if [every single person in] the world hates you;" yet this is what many would force upon **John 3:16**. Likewise, when we read in **John 12:19** "*The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him;*" no one with understanding would interpret this as "behold, [every single person in] the world is gone after him;" because it is clear that the majority of the Pharisees, Sadducees, etc., had not gone after Him. Thus, especially in light of the verses in the "*God hates and God loves*" sections above, one cannot rightly make God loving the *kosmon* the equivalent of God loving "every single person who has ever lived in the *kosmon*."

Thirdly, the word *whosoever* is "pas ho" in the Greek and it literally means *all the*. "*The*" is a definite article and it limits "*all*" to one specific group.

Fourthly, the word *believeth* is the *participle* form of the Greek word *pisteuo*. In modern English, we would translate it as *believing*. As an adjective, *pisteuon* (again, the participle form of *pisteuo*) modifies the words "*all the*" making it "*all the believing*." So far we see that we are dealing with a specific group so far called "all the believing."

Fifthly, the prepositional phrase "*in Him*" (more accurately "*into Him*") modifies *believing* and causes the phrase to literally read as "*all the believing into Him*." In English, such language is a bit awkward, so "*ones*" would be inserted for clarity; thus, making it "all the believing into Him *ones*." This verse teaches us that there is *one group* who will not perish, the "*all the believing into him [ones]*." The Lord declared in **Isaiah 43:10** "*Ye [are] my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I [am] he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.*" The elect were chosen by God *unto* belief — they are the remnant, the chosen few, the *all the believing into him [ones]*, whom the Lord will call, draw, pour out His Spirit upon, and save. This is a specific, *predetermined-by-God* people and not a people left up to the determination of man's fallen will or to chance. They are His eternally-elected spiritual family (hence language like brethren, sons, daughters, bride, etc.) and not one of them will be lost.

Sixthly, keeping with the King James rendering for the sake of argument, “*Whosoever believeth in him...*” is no more of a “free offer” than the “*whosever looketh on a woman...*” language found in **Matthew 5:28** which reads “*I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*”

“Whosoever looketh” (*pas ho blepon*) follows the same exact grammatical construction as “whosoever believeth” (*pas ho pisteoun*); you simply cannot make **John 3:16** a free offer unless you entertain the absurdity that the Lord Jesus was making **Matthew 5:28** a free offer as well. Do you believe that Christ the Lord was *inviting* sinners to freely come and look upon a woman to lust after her? Clearly the Lord was simply making a statement of absolute fact in Matthew 5:28 and this is how we are to interpret John 3:16 as well.

In light of everything that I have said so far, we can summarize John 3:16 as stating ‘For God *in this manner* loved the *orderly arrangement of mankind*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *all the believing into Him [ones]* should not perish, but have everlasting life.’

The Arminian: You argue that Jesus did not die for everyone but only for those who will believe. Yet, the Bible is clear that Jesus died for everyone... including those who he knew would reject him.

The Christian: Though God uses various descriptive terms for His elect (the church, sheep, bride, people, seed, children, etc.), it is clear that the Lord Jesus Christ only died for them. Nothing in the Bible, when read in context, even remotely suggests that the Lord Jesus Christ died for all of mankind. God only wants those for whom Christ died to be saved and He only died for those who were chosen in Him from before the foundation of the world. Our Lord will assuredly save every single one of them; not one will be lost, not one will perish in Hell. Consider the following concerning those for whom Christ died:

- **Acts 20:28** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with his own blood.
- **Ephesians 5:25-27** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it [lit. for her]. 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
- **John 10:11** I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.
- **John 10:15-16** As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, [and] one shepherd.
 - **John 10:26-27** But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:
- **John 15:13-16** Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. 15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. 16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

- **John 17:9-11, 20-21 [a prayer before the cross]** I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine 10 and all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. 11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we [are]... 20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”
- **John 11:50-52** Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. 51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; 52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.
- **Matthew 1:21** And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save His people from their sins.
- **Ephesians 5:1** Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.
- **Galatians 3:13** Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that hangeth on a tree
 - **But who is the *us*?** God defined it just a few chapters back in Ephesians 1:3-12 “3 Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly [places] in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; [even] in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.
- **Isaiah 53:1-12** Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? 2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, [there is] no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were [our] faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare

his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. 9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither [was any] deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put [him] to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see [his] seed, he shall prolong [his] days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, [and] shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him [a portion] with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The best picture of this *exclusive* salvation can be found in Old Testament (National) Israel. We read in:

Exodus 12:7, 12-13 And they shall take of the blood, and strike [it] on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it... 12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I [am] the LORD. 13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye [are]: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy [you], when I smite the land of Egypt.”

Egypt was a land filled with all sorts of ethnic groups; during that time you had Ethiopians, Nubians, Libyans, Syrians, Hittites, Canaanites, Hyksos, etc. in addition to the Egyptians. In a sense, it was a little “world.” God stated that He *will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt*. He did not state that He would smite the firstborn of the *ethnic* Egyptians only but *all* the firstborn *in the land of Egypt*. The only people spared, the only people under the blood were the Israelites and those non-Hebrew strangers yoked to them (the latter being a picture of the Gentile church). Likewise, the only people spared in this world, the only people under the blood of Christ are the elect (the spiritual Israelites, the “Israel of God,” which consists of both Jewish and Gentile saints). The spiritual elect are the only ones for whom the blood of Christ was shed just as the national elect were the only ones for whom the blood of the Passover lamb was shed.

Consider also the *scapegoat* and all of the Mosaic sacrifices and washings which were only for the ethnic Israelites and the strangers/sojourners that dwelt amongst them (e.g. Uriah the Hittite, Ruth the Moabitess, and many others). Never did the priests sacrifice for the whole world or ceremonially lay upon the scapegoat the sins of all mankind. These ceremonial sacrifices pointed to the salvific work of Christ for His elect, both Jew and Gentile, and *only* for the elect.

We read in Exodus **28:9-12** “*And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: 10 Six of their names on one stone, and [the other] six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth... 11 With the work of an engraver in stone, [like] the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold. 12 And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod [for] stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a memorial.*” Aaron, as high priest for earthly Israel, bore the names of the sons/tribes of Israel before the Lord as a memorial. Every time he went before the Lord, he did so as their representative. The high priest did not bear anything for the *whole world* as a memorial, but only for the chosen (earthly) nation. Christ as the High Priest for His people, the spiritual elect, represents them before the Father *and only them*. Just as God chose national Israel; led them out of bondage into the promised land, saw them under the Passover lamb’s blood and the blood of the other sacrifices, saw them washed with the ceremonial washings, and so on, God the Father chose an elect people in Christ, gave them to Him; the Lord led them out of spiritual bondage and into the promised land (the Christian

is seated with Christ in the heavenlies even now), having sacrificed Himself for them and washed them clean in His own blood. Nowhere is the “whole of mankind” to be seen in any of these blessed types.

The Arminian: Putting together verses that name specific groups for whom Jesus died does not mean that He ONLY died for them. He died for them, but for everyone else also. Jesus is everyone’s savior, not just the elect’s! See John 1:29, 3:17, 4:42, 12:47; 1 John 2:2; and other such passages.

The Christian: Firstly, we are not dealing with specific *groups* (plural) but one specific *group* (singular) that is identified via various descriptive terms. If the Lord Jesus Christ teaches that He died for His children and never states that He died for those who are *not* His children, then how can you reasonably argue that He died for everyone? Nowhere does the Bible teach that He died for those who are “*bastards and not sons*.” If the Lord Jesus specifically states that He died for the Church, i.e. the *true, elect Church*, and never states that He died for those who *remain* in false churches, how can you argue that He died for those who remain in the synagogue of Satan? If He clearly states that He died for His sheep, and never states that He died for those who are not His sheep, then how can you argue that He died for the spiritual *goats*? If the Lord specifically states that He died for the Bride, the collective body of believers, and never states that He died for the *great whore* and those who remain in fornication with her, how can you argue that He died for the whore and her consorts? By stating clearly and repeatedly that He died for His people, and by failing to state that He died for those who are not His people, logic dictates that He only died for His people.

Secondly, if the Lord Jesus Christ was everyone’s Saviour, then everyone would be saved. A Saviour is one who *actually* saves and not one who hypothetically makes it possible for people to save themselves if they so choose; that is, if they “decide” to accept His offer and make His blood effectual for them. **Luke 19:10** declares that “...*the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost*.” What the Lord Jesus came to do He did. We read in **John 17:4** “*I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*.” Everything Christ needed to do He did; His acts during His sojourn had ramifications both throughout time and in eternity. He did not ‘*come to seek and to save that which was lost* if the lost will let him.’ The lost did not even know that they were lost until the Spirit of God revealed it to them upon regeneration and conversion. Remember also, that it is never about what man *lets* God do; it is all about what He has *purposed* to do – and what He purposed to do, that He will do *without fail*. Yet, the free-will “jesus” is a failure; countless millions for whom He supposedly died will perish in Hell. The true Lord Jesus cannot fail and did not fail – ‘*All that the Father giveth Him shall come to Him; and him that cometh to Him, He will in no wise cast out... And this is the Father’s will which hath sent Him, that of all which He hath given Him, He should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day*’ (**John 6:37, 39**).

As stated above, a Saviour is one who *actually* saves and not one who makes it possible for people to save themselves. Thus, the Lord Jesus Christ is indeed the *Savior of the world* but not the Saviour of *every single person* in the world. How can this be? Consider that most Jews thought that the Messiah would be a Savior to the godly within the Jewish world alone. Although they acknowledged salvation for the small number of Gentile proselytes/converts/sojourners, they generally viewed the Gentiles as wicked, godless, dogs with no hope of salvation. However, the Holy Spirit throughout the Bible has made it abundantly clear that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior of the whole world – that is, of the godly amongst *both* the Jewish remnant *and* the Gentile masses. No longer did a non-Jew have to become a Jewish proselyte (or a sojourner within Israel) to be saved; no, now the born-from-above chosen Gentile would be incorporated into the Kingdom of God without having to become a (national/proselyte) Jew.

For an even clearer picture, consider again **John 10:15-16, 26-27** “*As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, [and] one shepherd...26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me...*” Reason it out: (1) The Lord laid down His life for His sheep; (2) There are people who are not of His sheep; (3) Therefore, there are people for whom He did not lay down his life. Only blindness and hardness of heart would cause a person to argue against such clear truth.

Note also that in **John 10:15-16, 26-27** we see *three* groups of people: (1) the elect amongst the Jews, (2) the elect amongst the Gentiles, and (3) the non-elect. The elect amongst the Jews are the original, or first, fold (“*I lay down My life for the sheep*”). The elect amongst the Gentiles are the other sheep which are not of the original fold (“*And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring*”). Both of these groups are said to hear the voice of Christ and to follow Him – they are the world of God’s elect, the great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, as per **Revelation 7:9**. They are rich and poor, male and female, kings and subjects; they are the *known* of God; the world of those whom the Lord foreknew from eternity.

The third group, the non-elect, are those of whom the Lord Jesus spoke when He stated “*But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.*” The sheep hear His voice but the non-sheep, the goats, do not. God did not state that *because* they believed not *therefore* they were not of His sheep. No! The Lord Jesus stated that *because* they were not of His sheep, *because* they were never counted amongst His sheep, they believe not – that is why the Lord said to them in **John 8:43-44** “*Why do ye not understand my speech? [even] because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of [your] father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do...*” These wicked ones are they whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (**Revelation 13:8**). They are the ones of whom the Lord declares *I never knew you*.

We also need to ask: What is the end of the sheep? And what is the end of the goats? Consider, **Matthew 25:32-34, 41** “*And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth [his] sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world... 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*”

Sheep always have been sheep and always will be sheep (which is why the Lord Jesus spoke of a kingdom prepared for *them* from the foundation of the world). Goats always have been goats and always will be goats; they were created, even *begotten* and *born*, to be goats. In light of **Romans 9:11-13**, we can safely state that “*For [the children] being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger...*” ‘Jacob was of His sheep and Esau was a goat.’

The Arminian: Quoting a lot of verses may make you sound good but it does not make you correct. The Bible clearly teaches that god has a benevolent plan for everyone and that he wants all mankind to be saved. God does not want *anyone* to go to Hell.

The Christian: It isn’t about the number of verses quoted nor is it about trying to sound impressive. It is about taking a holistic approach to the Bible and viewing all subjects in their correct scriptural context – this is the heart of proper biblical hermeneutics and exegesis. The greatest errors often come from isolating verses (or portions of verses), removing them from their immediate and

collective context, and interpreting them in a manner that pleases the flesh and that indulges the spirit of pride.

We read in **2 Peter 1:19-21** “*We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake [as they were] moved by the Holy Ghost.*” The more sure word of prophecy that we have is the completed Bible *alone* and in its entirety. Thus, we need to take heed to the Bible *alone* and in its entirety. We are to do so knowing that no prophecy of the scripture is of any *private* interpretation – with *private* meaning *pertaining to one’s self, one’s own, belonging to one’s self*. The best way to avoid interpretations that stem from our own incomplete knowledge, flawed wisdom, and corrupt understanding, is to take heed to the entirety of the word, value the holiness of it, meditate upon the divine origin of it, beware of those who would twist it, and to (as God enables) “*Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance [i.e. forms] of evil*” (**1 Thessalonians 5:19-22**). Said another way, we are to ‘*receive the word with all readiness of mind, and search the scriptures daily, whether those things were so*’ that we heard and read from others (**Acts 17:11**). We are not to rely on man-made commentaries, encyclopedias, etc. as our primary resource; instead, as the Holy Spirit enables, we are to seek to compare spiritual things with spiritual, scripture with scripture, using the Bible (with lexicons and concordances as necessary in light of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek original text) as its own dictionary, commentary and interpreter.

As for your main point, that God does not want anyone to go to Hell; if God did not want anyone to go to Hell, He would not harden them for and appoint them to (nor ordain them for and send them to) Hell. God does what He wants to do; His will be done. It is His eternal will and purpose to show forth His power and wrath against the wicked by sending them to Hell *forever*. This is why they were created and this is why He reserves them for final judgment.

- **Proverbs 16:4** The LORD hath made all [things] for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.
- **2 Thessalonians 2:11** And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion [lit. a working of error], that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.
- **John 12:40** He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with [their] eyes, nor understand with [their] heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.
- **2 Peter 2:9,12** The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished ... 12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made [gennao, lit. born or begotten] to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption.
- **Jude 1:4** For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.
- **Job 21:29-30** Have ye not asked them that go by the way? and do ye not know their tokens, 30 That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.
- **Romans 9:17-24** For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will [have mercy], and whom he will he

hardeneth. 19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? 20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed [it], Why hast thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? 22 [What] if God, willing to shew [his] wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, 24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

- **1 Peter 2:6-10** Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe [he is] precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, [even to them] which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. 9 But ye[are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 Which in time past [were] not a people, but [are] now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Does anyone really believe that Noah was declaring “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life” while he was building the ark? Was Lot telling the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah that “God loves them and wants them to be saved?” Before destroying Jericho and the other Canaanitish lands (wherein the Israelites slayed the men, woman, children, and elderly), did Joshua send messengers unto them declaring “God loves you; he’s standing at the door of your heart, won’t you just *let* him in.”

Consider the following examples of God’s judgment again young and old, sick and healthy, men and women:

- **Genesis 19:24-25** Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; 25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.
- **Genesis 6:11-13** The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. 13 And God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.
- **Deuteronomy 2:32-35** Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz. 33 And the LORD our God delivered him before us; and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people. 34 And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city, we left none to remain: 35 Only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves, and the spoil of the cities which we took.
- **Joshua 6:20-21** So the people shouted when [the priests] blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. 21 And they utterly destroyed all that [was] in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.
- **Joshua 10:28, 39** And that day Joshua took Makkedah, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof he utterly destroyed, them, and all the souls that [were] therein; he let none remain; and he did to the king of Makkedah as he did unto the king of Jericho... **39** And he took it, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof; and they smote them with the edge of the sword,

and utterly destroyed all the souls that [were] therein; he left none remaining: as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir, and to the king thereof; as he had done also to Libnah, and to her king.

- **Joshua 11:14** And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe.
- **1 Samuel 15:3** Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.
- **Deuteronomy 7:1-2, 16** When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; 2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, [and] utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them... 16 And thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that [will be] a snare unto thee.
- **Deuteronomy 20:16-17** But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee [for] an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: 17 But thou shalt utterly destroy them; [namely], the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee:

The Arminian: What about 2 Peter 3:9 and 1 Timothy 2:4? I think that these verses prove that God doesn't want *or will* anyone to perish and go to Hell – he wants everyone to be saved.

The Christian: Passages have to be read in their immediate and holistic context. Moreover, an *incorrectly perceived* exception can never be allowed to override a biblical rule.

2 Peter 3:8-9 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day [is] with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Here we see a distinction between the “*some men*” on the one hand and the “*beloved*,” also called the “*us-ward*,” on the other. A few verses back (in **2 Peter 3:3**) we see that “*there shall come in the last days scoffers....*” Peter is both rebuking and countering *these men* (the “*some men*” or “*scoffers*”) by stating that God is not slack concerning His promise to *His people* (i.e. the “*beloved*,” the “*us-ward*”) and will have *them* (His people) all come to repentance. God is not declaring that He would have ‘all men and women throughout history’ come to repentance; this cannot be because whatever God wills comes to pass (His will *will* be done). Instead, what God is teaching us is that the *beloved*, the *us-ward*, the elect (both Jew and Gentile), will be saved and that not one *of them* shall perish.

1 Timothy 2:1-4 “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, [and] giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and [for] all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this [is] good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

Here context is also important. Through the Apostle Paul, the Holy Spirit exhorts us to pray for all men but then goes on to define what is in view by “*all men*.” The Spirit of God does not mean we are to endeavor to pray for every single person living, no longer living, or who will live at some point in the future. No, the Holy Spirit is exhorting us to pray for all *manner* of men, including those in authority

(whether saint or heathen). Some may be hesitant to pray for those in authority because of verses like **Daniel 4:17** *“This matter [is] by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.”* Although we often see that the lowest (basest) of men often rule in this world, and rule wickedly, we are still to pray for them *“that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”*

We are to pray for people whether they are rich or poor; in authority or under authority; intelligent or not very intelligent; learned or unlearned; healthy or sick; kind or unkind; honourable or base; moral or immoral... We are instructed to pray for all *manner* of people but never for literally *all* people.

Thus, when we skip down from verses *one through three* and come to verse *four*, we see that the same “all men” definition is in place. Just as we are not being instructed to pray for every single person who has ever, or will ever, come into being – God is not teaching us that He wills the salvation of every single person who has ever, or will ever, come into being. Again, God is simply declaring to us that He wills the salvation of all types and manner of men. His elect, the great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues (**Revelation 7:9**) are made up of all types, classes, manner, and sorts of people.

Thus, **2 Peter 3:9** and **1 Timothy 2:1-4** still point to the elect and not to the non-elect, the sheep and not the goats. What we are seeing is the ‘original fold’ and the ‘other fold’ of sheep being discussed – but they are both still sheep... goats are nowhere in view here. Thus, these two passages tie-in to the following as well:

- **John 6:37-39** All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.
- **Luke 12:32** Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.
- **John 10:27-29** “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man] pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave [them] me, is greater than all; and no [man] is able to pluck [them] out of my Father’s hand.”
- **Matthew 18:14** Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.
- **Ephesians 1:5-12** Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; [even] in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

Also, note that *all* in the Bible often does not mean “all of mankind” but “all that God has in view.” The same goes with the word *world* as we discussed already. Consider the following and judge whether it makes sense to make *all* equate to *all mankind*.

- **Act 2:17** “*And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy...*”

Few would teach that this passages meant that the Holy Spirit would be poured out upon all mankind, including those who will end up dying in unbelief and rebellion against God- yet it says *all flesh*.

- **Luke 2:1** “*And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.*”

Few would teach that this passage includes the Polynesians, Australian Aboriginals, the Native Americans, etc. – yet it says *all the world*.

- **Luke 6:26** “*Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.*”

Few would teach that it is woe for you if fellow Christians speak well of you – yet it says *all men*.

- **John 12:19** “*The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.*”

Few would teach that by “*the world is gone after Him*” the unbelieving Pharisees were also including themselves– yet it says *the world*.

The Arminian: In all of your arguments, you seem to have forgotten one very important point. You seem to have forgotten that God loves and respects our free will and would not do anything to interfere with it. You need to take that into account when interpreting the hate, love, died for, and other such verses that you are quoting.

The Christian: God *alone* has a free will since His will *alone* is truly autonomous, independent, uncoerced, unhindered, and unobstructed. Whereas the will of God is completely free and sovereign, the will of man is completely enslaved to sin and made subject to the sovereign will and purpose of God. Our Lord is in *complete* control of all things.

Sadly, even some true Christians will state that they believe in free will *in the sense* that man has a free will to sin and only to sin. They rightly acknowledge that man, of himself, never has a will to do true good. However, even such qualified language is erroneous in that no man has the free will to commit *all* of the sin that rests in his heart. God restrains the sin in man to suit His purpose and unleashes it to suit His purpose. No matter how much the wicked heart of a sinner wishes to sin (which is all that it naturally wishes to do), if God has not ordained a particular sin to come into fruition that sin will not come to be. For example, a person may be fully intent on killing every Christian he encounters but unless God ordained his success he will surely fail. Though his heart is full of such evil, he has no power, no free will or agency, to bring about that desire. If this wicked one does manage to fulfill his desire, it is only because it suited the grand and glorious purpose of God and thus God ordained the fulfillment. An example of this would be murderous Saul of Tarsus before he became the Apostle Paul. Saul killed no Christian that the Lord did not specifically ordain him to kill.

Consider the following passages regarding the sovereignty of God over the minds, hearts, and will of men.

- **Proverbs 21:1** The king’s heart [is] in the hand of the LORD, [as] the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will.

- Idiomatically, the Jews believed that if something was true for the king, then how much more so it must be for his subjects.
- **Proverbs 16:9** A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.
- **Proverbs 16:1** The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, [is] from the LORD.
- **Proverbs 20:24** Man's goings [are] of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?
- **Jeremiah 10:23** O LORD, I know that the way of man [is] not in himself: [it is] not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

The will derives from the heart; the Greeks and Hebrews of old understood this. By the heart, they did not mean the physical organ, but the center of man's inner being. In the Hebrew, both *leb* and *lebab* [H3820 & H3824; לֵב & לֵבָב; pronounced lāv & lā·vāv'], most often translated as *heart* in the KJV is defined as *the inner man, mind, will, heart, soul, understanding, inner part, mind, thinking, reflection, memory, inclination, resolution, determination (of will), conscience, seat of moral character, seat appetites, emotions and passions, and the seat of courage.*

Likewise, in the Greek, *kardia* [G2588; καρδιά; (kär-dē'-ä)]; almost exclusively translated as *heart* in the KJV, means *the heart, centre and seat of spiritual life, the soul or mind, as it is the fountain and seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavours, of the understanding, the faculty and seat of the intelligence, of the will and character, of the soul so far as it is affected and stirred in a bad way or good, or of the soul as the seat of the sensibilities, affections, emotions, desires, appetites, passions, will, and emotion.*

If the heart is wicked then the will is wicked and *we know* that the natural heart is wicked because **Jeremiah 17:9** declares "The heart [is] deceitful above all [things], and desperately wicked: who can know it?" **Matthew 15:19-20** declares "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are [the things] which defile a man..." How can man exercise a wicked will from a wicked heart to do that which is righteous and good? He cannot (hence **Jeremiah 13:23** "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? [then] may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil"); which is why the entire notion of "free-will Christianity" is foolishness.

Moreover, if God controls the king's heart, and thus our own, then He controls the will as well. If He turneth the heart whithersoever He chooses, so turneth He the will. If no matter what we devise in our heart, the Lord directs our step – how can we have a free will? If even that devising, that preparation of the heart, is from the Lord – how can our will be free? If our goings are not of our own free will, but of the Lord, how can our will be free? If it is not in man, if it is not up to our "free will," to direct our steps, then how can our will be free? If God hardens whomsoever He wishes to harden, then how can their will be free? It cannot be! Pertaining to the nature and ability of man, "free-willism" is the most absurd religious doctrine ever conceived.

Consider also Satan; in **2 Timothy 2:25-26** we read "*In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And [that] they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*" – Satan, as God's servant, as His "dog on a leash," can only do what God specifically authorizes him to do (see Job chapters one and two as proof text). Since God controls the will of both man and Satan, and authorizes Satan to take captive the unsaved at his (God-ordained) will, how can man have a free will? He cannot since *no self-control* equates to *no free will*. If a man cannot even control his eyes, lips, tongue, or temper; if he cannot refrain from over-eating, over-drinking; over-sleeping; etc., how on earth can he be foolish enough to think his will is free?

It is true that a person can make choices. We can decide what hat to put on, what car to buy, or what song to listen to... but this is not “free will.” Man has self-will, a fallen will enslaved to sinful-self and Satan *by nature*, but by no means free. Moreover, as the verses above indicate, even this self-will is ordained and controlled by God. There isn’t a single aspect of our will wherein we eclipse, run counter to, or override the eternal will and purpose of God in our lives. We may run afoul of His law but never can we set at naught His will.

Consider now the mindset of those who wish to exercise their so-called free will. Think about the examples below that God gives of those who spoke of *their will* when it came to religious matters:

- **Isaiah 14:12-15** How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! [how] art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. 15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.
- **Ezekiel 28:2** Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart [is] lifted up, and thou hast said, I [am] a God, I sit [in] the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou [art] a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:
- **2 Thessalonians 2:3-4** Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Whenever we think in terms of our “free will,” we are saying that we have control, we have the ability to do what we want, we can make our own decisions – *we can be like God*. Freewill theology is the highest manifestation of pride and arrogance. It is an attempt to dethrone God and to sit in the seat of sovereignty over our own lives, and often, over the lives of others. This is nothing short of direct rebellion and opposition to the sovereign purpose, will, and foreordaining decree of God. It is the attempted exaltation of the human will over the divine will. The Bible calls it *will-worship* (**Colossians 2:23**), *making your belly your God* (**Philippians 3:19** and **Romans 16:18**), and trying to be both *as God* (**Genesis 3:5**) and *in the place of* the True and Living God. It is the erecting of idols and high places in the mind; it is wickedness and it is damnable.

The Arminian: I disagree; our church teaches that anyone can come to the Lord. All they have to do is sincerely make a decision for Christ and accept him into their hearts. Just as I can decide my political party affiliation, philosophical views, the person for whom I wish to vote, etc., I can also decide what god I wish to serve. Everyone can... and I decided to come to Christ of my own free will.

The Christian: To address your points, I have already put forth many verses and many legitimate arguments that stem therefrom; it is best to consider these things *carefully* before dismissing them or putting forth knee-jerk counter-arguments. Nonetheless, there is another important factor that you should consider – the *dechomai* factor (which directly relates to the precept that no one can accept the Lord Jesus Christ or otherwise come to Him in their own strength and of their own will). Man lacks both the spiritual strength and the spiritual desire to turn to the *True* God. He will turn to physical and/or mental idols but never to the True and Living God. Likewise, no unregenerate person can possibly “accept Jesus.” In the first place, sinners do not “accept Jesus;” the Lord must make His people *acceptable* before God, in Him. However, concerning this specific notion of “accepting” Him, consider:

- **1 Corinthians 2:14** ...the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned.”
 - The word *receiveth* is the Greek work *dechomai* and it literally means to receive, to accept, to take hold of, to take up, to take with the hand, embrace, make one’s own. Compare this to:
- **Isaiah 64:7** “...[there is] none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities”

When a person states that one must “accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour” they are stating that a person must believe the Gospel (or what they call the gospel) which is the spiritual doctrine being said about Him (who Christ is, what He is, what He came to do, and what He accomplished as per **1 Corinthians 15:1-4**). But **1 Corinthians 2:14** declares that the natural (i.e. unregenerate) man cannot receive spiritual things. This verse clearly teaches that carnal man cannot *accept/receive/embrace* the Lord Jesus; it is an impossibility! They cannot stir themselves up to “make a decision for” Christ.

Again, what they can, and so often do *accept/receive/embrace* is the fleshly, carnal, earthy, caricature that they make of the true Jesus. They can create in their mind and accept in their heart a free-will idol that they call “jesus” – but they can never naturally accept the true One. Many get emotionally worked up and make decisions for their “(false) christ idols” but they can never embrace, receive, or take hold upon the true Christ *unless* God first takes hold of them, turns them, and *causes* them to receive the Lord...for Christ Jesus declared:

- **John 6:44, 65:** No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw [helkuo, lit. drag] him.... Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.
- **John 8:43** Why do ye not understand my speech? [even] because ye cannot hear my word.
- **Matthew 13:11**Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.
- **John 15:16** Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.
 - Remember, to *choose* something is to *make a decision for* it. True Christians did not choose the Lord, or “make a decision for Christ;” true Christians were chosen by Him, and ordained with power, to love and serve Him. It is never about what we did or do – it is about what He has already done *for* us (first and foremost) followed by what He does *in* us.

Consider again such verses as:

- **Jeremiah 13:23** Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? [then] may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.
- **Romans 8:7-8** Because the carnal mind [is] enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.
- **Deuteronomy 29:4** “Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.

If you or anyone else argues the common Arminian position that “the Holy Spirit restores the will with *prevenient grace* and brings people to a point wherein they can decide to either accept or reject Jesus,” I would remind you that *of the true God*, believers are to be “...*confident of this very thing, that He which*

hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6). If the Holy Spirit restored a person’s will, He had to have restored their heart (from whence the will derives). If He has given them such a new heart, they *will* believe the Truth... not the Arminian, free-will counterfeit, but the real Truth.

This brings us to a related point. When people speak of accepting Jesus into their heart, or “letting” the Lord into their heart, they evidence the fact that they are ignorant of a very important doctrinal precept – their heart is *filthy*. They never seem to consider the question of why a pure and holy God would want to enter in, and indwell, their wicked, self-willed heart. Consider again what God says about the natural state of man and his heart (not *hearts* but *heart* since we all share the same natural, fallen, heart of Adam by nature):

- **Jeremiah 17:9** The heart [is] deceitful above all [things], and desperately wicked: who can know it?
- **Job 15:14-16** What [is] man, that he should be clean? and [he which is] born of a woman, that he should be righteous? 15 Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. 16 How much more abominable and filthy [is] man, which drinketh iniquity like water?
- **Ecclesiastes 9:3** This [is] an evil among all [things] that are done under the sun, that [there is] one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness [is] in their heart while they live, and after that [they go] to the dead.
- **Job 25:4-5** How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean [that is] born of a woman? 5 Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. 6 How much less man, [that is] a worm? and the son of man, [which is] a worm?
- **Job 14:1-6** Man [that is] born of a woman [is] of few days, and full of trouble. 2 He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. 3 And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? 4 Who can bring a clean [thing] out of an unclean? not one. 5 Seeing his days [are] determined, the number of his months [are] with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass; 6 Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day.
- **Genesis 6:5** And GOD saw that the wickedness of man [was] great in the earth, and [that] every imagination of the thoughts of his heart [was] only evil continually.
- **Genesis 8:21** And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart [is] evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.
- **Psalms 53:1-3** ...The fool hath said in his heart, [There is] no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: [there is] none that doeth good. 2 God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were [any] that did understand, that did seek God. 3 Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; [there is] none that doeth good, no, not one.
- **Matthew 15:19** For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies...
- **Mark 7:21-22** For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness...

We never read in the Bible that God wants to indwell the abominable heart that characterizes an unregenerate person. Instead, we read that God gives His people a new heart and that is what He

indwells. He sovereignly gives it to them; the great God does not wait around like some lost dog hoping that someone will accept Him and let Him into their heart and home. That is blasphemy. The TRUE GOD, for His name, glory, and honour's sake, gives His people a new heart at the appointed time of their regeneration. He brings the Gospel to them, regenerates them, gives them faith, repentance and this new heart with which to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. It is in this new God-given heart that God dwells. For passages regarding the giving of this new heart, consider:

- **Deuteronomy 30:6** And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.
- **Psalms 51:10** Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.
- **Jeremiah 32:39-40** And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: 40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.
- **Ezekiel 11:19-20** And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: 20 That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.
- **Psalms 37:23-24** The steps of a [good] man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. 24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth [him with] his hand... 31 The law of his God [is] in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.
- **Ezekiel 36:22-32** Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not [this] for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. 23 And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I [am] the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. 24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. 25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do [them]. 28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. 29 I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. 30 And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. 31 Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that [were] not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. 32 Not for your sakes do I [this], saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.
 - In the passage immediately above, we see a large number of I will's and will's and they all pertain to what God sovereignly will do when saving His people. There is nothing about Him doing these things "if they let me" or "if they make a decision for me." God is sovereign and waits on the will of no man – He does *whatsoever* He willed, purposed, and is pleased to do. He saves those whom He willed to save (in light of His eternal grace and mercy) and damns those whom He willed to damn (in light of his eternal wrath and hatred against them and their sins).

The Arminian: Are you really arguing that not everyone has a chance to get saved? Not only is such an idea unfair but it also makes god a monster and makes Christians nothing more than robots and puppets!

The Christian: Salvation never has been and never will be based upon *chance* (or *having a chance*); it is based squarely upon the sovereign and eternal *purpose* of God (which is to glorify Himself in the highest, through the Lord Jesus Christ, in the salvation of elect sinners).

Again, God will only save those whom He has chosen and purposed to save (in Christ) from before the foundation of the world. Notice the emphasis on His *good pleasure, purpose, grace, and love* in the following passages:

- **Romans 8:28-30** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”
- **Isaiah 46:9-13** Remember the former things of old: for I [am] God, and [there is] none else; [I am] God, and [there is] none like me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times [the things] that are not [yet] done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: 11 Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken [it], I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed [it], I will also do it. 12 Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that [are] far from righteousness: 13 I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.
- **Ephesians 1:3-11** Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly [places] in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; [even] in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.
- **Ephesians 3:8-12** Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9 And to make all [men] see what [is] the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: 10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly [places] might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: 12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.
- **2 Timothy 1:9** Who hath saved us, and called [us] with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began...

- **Ephesians 2:1-10** And you [hath he quickened], who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit together in heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in [his] kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

As for “fair,” fair would be for God to send us all to Hell. We all deserve eternal punishment due to our sins; the fairness and justice of God, as revealed by His righteous law, would be for every single fallen son and daughter of Adam to suffer eternal wrath were it not for Christ. It is not *fairness* but *mercy* that saves. Fairness was extracted in the substitutionary, atoning work of Christ and mercy was bestowed upon all of the elect in light thereof. Human notions of fairness are irrelevant – no one is owed the mercy of God.

Also, we should pay close attention to the fact that the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle Paul, anticipated the *unfairness* and *monster* charge and asks in **Romans 9:14** “*What shall we say then? [Is there] unrighteousness with God?*” He goes on to answer in **Romans 9:14-18** “*God forbid. 15 For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16 So then [it is] not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. 17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will [have mercy], and whom he will he hardeneth.*”

God is both *just* and *fair* to save His elect and send the rest of mankind to Hell. **Romans 3:26** declares God to be both “*...Just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*” **Isaiah 45:21** declares “*...[there is] no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; [there is] none beside me.*” God is a just God in the salvation of the elect because Christ endured the just penalty of the law when He was made sin for His people, suffering in their stead, atoning for them to the fullest, and rising again on the third day to evidence that the sin debt had been paid. God is a fair God also because it would be *unfair* and *unjust* of Him to save those for whom Christ did not die (and rise again) as their Propitiation and Redeemer.

As for the “robot/puppet” charge, and similar language that will-worshipers use to express their disdain for the sovereignty of God, the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul anticipated this argument as well. Remember that we just read in **Romans 9:17-18** “*For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will [have mercy], and whom he will he hardeneth.*” Now consider the argument in verse 19 “*Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?*” God is anticipating the wicked argument “If God hardens whom He wills, and saves whom He wills, and our will plays no part in it whatsoever, then how can He find fault with those whom He hardens – it wouldn’t be right!” God answers through the Apostle as follows in **Romans 9:20-24** “*Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed [it], Why hast thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? 22 [What] if God, willing to shew [his] wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the*

vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, 24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?”

God is sovereign; will you curse Him and blaspheme His holy Name or will you, by His grace, bow to His sovereignty and praise Him. I can tell you with all assuredness that if God did not elect some people unto salvation, no one would be saved, because *but for* His electing grace and mercy, no one would ever seek Him, love Him, or experience eternal communion with Him. The natural heart of man is too stubborn and wicked to ever turn to God as discussed earlier. No one sent to Hell can ever honestly claim that ‘though they loved the True God, He sent them to Hell anyway.’ They may have loved their Arminian, Semipelagian, Arian, Sacramentalist, or Talmudic gods – but they never loved the True Lord and Savior. They loved a genie they called Jesus but they never loved nor worshiped the true Lord Jesus.

The Christian, however, is different. God’s people are *made willing* in the day of His power. Out of the new heart that He gives them, He works in them a new will to love Him and desire to walk with Him. But the wicked, the non-elect, never receive such a heart or will; thus, they never receive a God-given and God-wrought love for the Truth. Therefore, we read:

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

The Arminian: If election and predestination is real, then God only elects and predestinates those whom he foreknew would want to come to Him. This is what *Romans 8:29* means when we read “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” You will say that “God made them willing” but he only makes willing those whom he knew would already be willing.

The Christian: In *Romans 8:29*, God speaks of *whom*... not *what* He foreknew. This passage is about God’s eternal, loving foreknowledge of His people (*Ephesians 1:4*); it is not about what He foreknew they would do (though He does know that as well given that He has ordained all that anyone will ever do). Consider the following examples of the foreknowledge of God concerning His people:

- **Nahum 1:7** The LORD [is] good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.
- **2 Timothy 2:19** Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.
- **1 Corinthians 8:3** But if any man love God, the same is known of him.
- **Jeremiah 1:5** Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, [and] I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.
- **Exodus 33:17** And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.
 - **Isaiah 43:1** But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called [thee] by thy name; thou [art] mine
- **John 10:14-15** I am the good shepherd, and know my [sheep], and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

- **Psalm 139:1** [[To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.]] O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known [me]. 2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

Moreover, God knew from eternity that no fallen son or daughter of Adam would ever seek Him, love Him, or otherwise desire after Him of their own will and strength. Thrice, God emphasized this (upon looking down the corridors of time). In fact, the first three passages I am about to give will make this point abundantly clear.

- **Psalm 14:2** The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, [and] seek God. 3 They are all gone aside, they are [all] together become filthy: [there is] none that doeth good, no, not one.
- **Psalm 53:2** God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were [any] that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; [there is] none that doeth good, no, not one.
- **Romans 3:10-12** As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.
- **John 1:11-13** He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
- **Romans 9:16** So then [it is] not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.
- **Psalm 110:3** Thy people [shall be] willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.
- **Philippians 2:13** For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure.
- **James 1:18** Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.
- **John 3:6-8** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

So we see that if someone comes to Christ it is only because the Father, by the Spirit, makes them willing and causes them to come.

The Arminian: What about those verses in the Bible which *prove* that man has a free will? Election and predestination have to be based on man's free will or else the Bible would make no sense in many places.

The Christian: There are no verses in the Bible that prove that man has a free-will; there are only verses in the Bible that prove that the will of God, alone, is free. We really have covered much of this already but consider what the Lord Jesus declared in:

- **John 15:5** I am the vine, ye [are] the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

- **1 Corinthians 4:7** For who maketh thee to differ [from another]? and what [knowledge, understanding, wisdom, faith, repentance, ears to hear, perseverance, etc.] hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive [it], why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received [it]?

We see again that the strength to do anything godly (spiritual) must come from the Lord Himself. The elect receive what the non-elect do not because God intends for the elect to receive it while denying it to the non-elect. All spiritual gifts and ability come directly from God and are limited to His spiritual family.

Regarding those commands related to salvation, in **Deuteronomy 10:16**, God declared “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.” Yet, in **Deuteronomy 30:6**, the Lord said to them “...the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” God commands in a way that makes it appear to the unsaved that they can carry-out His commands. He does this to harden the wicked (in their presumption) and to reveal to the heart of His people their utter need for His grace. The proud say ‘ye Lord, we can do it’ whereas God’s people say ‘Lord, have mercy upon us, give us grace, and cause us to do thy will.’

Remember, the Lord Jesus declared in **John 15:16** “*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain.*” When God does the choosing, He gives strength to His people to perform; it is Him working in them both to will and to do of His good pleasure (**Philippians 2:12-13**). The Lord’s election (choosing) always results in godly, lasting fruit in the elect (the chosen) to one degree or another. However, when the will-worshippers do the choosing, they are simply making a decision for, and turning to, an idol. They were never chosen and ordained to bear true, spiritual fruit.

I think you will agree that, according to freewill theology, one must hear the gospel, understand it, believe it, repent, seek after Christ in light thereof, accept Him into their heart, obey his commandments, persevere, etc. Yet, consider the following examples that reflect the inability of man to perform any of these things (of themselves) and note how it is the effectual working of God in a believer that makes such things possible in their lives:

Hearing: Those who hold to free-will look to verses like the following to prove that man must (naturally) hear God through His word and open up their hearts to Him: **Revelation 3:20** *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* –**Yet, consider:**

- **Proverbs 20:12** The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them;
- **Deuteronomy 29:4** Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day;
- **John 8:43** Why do ye not understand my speech? [even] because ye cannot hear my word;
- **John 8:47** He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear [them] not, because ye are not of God.
- **Jeremiah 6:10** To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear [is] uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it;
- **Isaiah 6:9-10** And He said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and

shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed;

- **Romans 10:17** So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
- **Isaiah 44:18** They have not known nor understood: for He hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; [and] their hearts, that they cannot understand;
- **Matthew 13:13-16** Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and [their] ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with [their] eyes, and hear with [their] ears, and should understand with [their] heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 16 But blessed [are] your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

Knowledge and Understanding: They also often believe that the knowledge and understanding of spiritual things, to one degree or another, can be obtained through human effort. However, note the woeful state of man's natural spiritual understanding in verses like: **Romans 3:9** *What then? are we better [than they]? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one; Psalm 14:2-3 The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, [and] seek God. 3 They are all gone aside, they are [all] together become filthy: [there is] none that doeth good, no, not one; Psalm 53:1-3 The fool hath said in his heart, [There is] no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: [there is] none that doeth good. 2 God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were [any] that did understand, that did seek God. 3 Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; [there is] none that doeth good, no, not one. – Yet, as for God's role, consider:*

- **Luke 8:10** And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.
- **1 John 5:20** And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, [even] in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.
- **Jeremiah 31:33** But this [shall be] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.
- **John 3:27** John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.
- **Matthew 16:17** And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed [it] unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.
- **Matthew 11:25** At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. 26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. 27 All things are delivered unto me

of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and [he] to whomsoever the Son will reveal [him].

- **1 Corinthians 2:9** But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed [them] unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.
- **Ephesians 1:17** That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints;
- **James 1:17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.
 - **Note:** This includes the gifts of spiritual hearing and understanding.
- **Luke 24:45** Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,
- **2 Corinthians 4:6** For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Believing: Free-will religion maintains that man can believe through his own natural, mustered-up faith and thus they can decide to obey passages like **1 John 3:23** And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

–Yet, consider:

- **Acts 13:48** And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.
- **Philippians 1:29** For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;
- **Acts 16:14** And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard [us]: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.
- **John 1:12-13** But as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
- **Acts 11:21** And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord
- **Ephesians 2:8-10** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.
- **Romans 10:17** So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
 - **Note:** in the Greek, the verb *believe* (G4100, πιστεύω, pisteuo) is directly derived from the Greek word for *faith* (Strong's G4102, πίστις, pistis); thus, if one believes one has faith and if one has faith, one believes. Seeing that faith cometh by hearing and that it is a

gift from God, we can rest assured that the ability to believe comes from God-given ears to hear and such belief and hearing is a gift of God — not of man (nor the working or exercising of the human will) lest any man should boast.

Asking & Seeking: As with the *hearing* section above, many think that seeking God and asking after His grace and mercy is something that stems from the human will (as a decision of the heart and mind). They would point to verses like **Luke 11:9** *And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.* – **Yet, consider:**

- **Isaiah 65:1** I am sought of [them that] asked not [for me]; I am found of [them that] sought me not:I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation [that] was not called by my name;
- **Isaiah 64:7** And [there is] none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.
- **Romans 3:9-12** What then? are we better [than they]? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth,there is none that seeketh after God.12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one;
- **Psalms 14:2-4** The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, [and] seek God. 3 They are all gone aside, they are [all] together become filthy: [there is] none that doeth good, no, not one. 4 Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people [as] they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD;
- **Psalms 53:1-3** The fool hath said in his heart, [There is] no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: [there is] none that doeth good. 2 God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were [any] that did understand, that did seek God. 3 Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; [there is] none that doeth good, no, not one;

Repenting: What of repentance? Is that something that man must muster-up and decide to do? Those who say yes point to verses like: **Acts 17:30** *And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent...*; **Matthew 4:17** *From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand...*; and **Acts 3:19** *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...* (**Acts 3:19**) – **Yet, consider:**

- **2 Timothy 2:24-25** And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all [men], apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;
- **Romans 2:4** Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?
- **Acts 11:18** When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.
- **Psalms 80:7** Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved;
- **Psalms 80:19** Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved;
- **Psalms 85:4** Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease;
- **1 Kings 18:37** Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou [art] the LORD God, and [that] thou hast turned their heart back again;

- **Jeremiah 31:18-19** I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself [thus]; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed [to the yoke]: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou [art] the LORD my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon [my] thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth;
- **Lamentations 5:21** Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old.

Obedying: Is obedience a freewill choice or the result of the foreordination and effectual working of God? Those who argue that obedience is a free exercise of the human will point to a verse like **Jeremiah 7:23** *But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. –Yet, consider:*

- **Isaiah 26:12** LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us;
- **Hebrew 13:20-21** Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom [be] glory for ever and ever. Amen;
- **Ecclesiastes 9:1** For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, [are] in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred [by] all [that is] before them.
- **Philippians 2:12-13** Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure;
- **2 Chronicles 30:12** Also in Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the LORD;
- **Ephesians 2:10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them;
- **Psalms 57:2** I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth [all things] for me;
- **2 Corinthians 9:8** And God [is] able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all [things], may abound to every good work;
- **Philippians 1:11** Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God;
- **Job 23:13-15** But He [is] in one [mind], and who can turn Him? and [what] His soul desireth, even [that] He doeth. 14 For He performeth [the thing that is] appointed for me; and many such [things are] with him. 15 Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.
- **2 Thessalonians 2:16-17** Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given [us] everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, 17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work;
- **Ezekiel 36:22-27** Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not [this] for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. 23 And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I [am]

the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. 24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. 25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do [them].

Persevering: How often have we heard will-worshippers use verses like the following to prove that one can lose their salvation if they do not strive to endure and keep from falling away: **Matthew 24:13** *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved...*; and **Hebrews 3:14** *For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.* – **Yet, consider:**

- **Jeremiah 32:39** And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.
- **1 Peter 1:3-5** Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
- **Hebrews 10:14** For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15 [Whereof] the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This [is] the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;
- **1 Samuel 2:9** He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.
- **Psalms 37:23** The steps of a [good] man are ordered by the LORD; and he delighteth in his way. 24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth [him with] his hand.
- **Philippians 1:6** Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ:
- **Psalms 37:28** For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever; but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.
- **Psalms 31:23** O love the LORD, all ye his saints: [for] the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.
- **Psalms 103:17** But the mercy of the LORD [is] from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; 18 To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.
- **Psalms 125:1** They that trust in the LORD [shall be] as mount Zion, [which] cannot be removed, [but] abideth for ever. 2 As the mountains [are] round about Jerusalem, so the LORD [is] round about his people from henceforth even for ever.
- **Proverbs 2:8** He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.

- **Isaiah 54:17** No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue [that] shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This [is] the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness [is] of me, saith the LORD.
- **Romans 8:28-39** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31 What shall we then say to these things? If God [be] for us, who [can be] against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? [It is] God that justifieth. 34 Who [is] he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- **Ephesians 4:30** And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.
- **Ephesians 1:13-14** In whom ye also [trusted], after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.
- **John 4:14** But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.
- **John 5:24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.
- **John 10:28** And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man] pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave [them] me, is greater than all; and no [man] is able to pluck [them] out of my Father's hand. 30 I and [my] Father are one.
- **John 17:11-12, 15** And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we [are]. 12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled... 15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.
- **John 6:37-40** All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

- **Jude 1:1** Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, [and] called:
- **Jude 1:24** Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present [you] faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,
- **1 Thessalonians 5:23-24** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and [I pray God] your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Faithful [is] he that calleth you, who also will do [it].
- **1 John 2:18-19** Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would [no doubt] have continued with us: but [they went out], that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

The Arminian: But the Bible itself uses the word *freewill* in the KJV and other versions! What about passages like Leviticus 22:18-23 and others wherein the Bible clearly uses the term?

The Christian: The term *freewill* used in these passages does not prove the existence of freewill in the since that most people think of it. This term is used most often to denote *sacrifices* and *offerings* that were voluntarily made or given – as opposed to those that were specifically commanded by the Mosaic Law. Consider the two words at issue:

- **Nēdab** – H5069 – נָדַב (ned·av') – Aramaic: *to volunteer, give freely, offer freely, to be willing or ready...*, a "*freewill offering*."
- **Nēdabah** – H5071 – נָדָבָה (nēdabah) – Hebrew: *free-will, readiness of mind, freely with a willing mind, voluntariness, voluntary, a "free-will offering," a "spontaneous offering."*

Incorporated into the translation and meaning as per the various lexicons is the notion of free-will... but is this biblically accurate? I do not believe so; not in the sense that the Arminians, Semipelagians, Sacramentalists, et al, use it. When we study how these words are used in all of the passages wherein they are found we begin to see that these words pertain to that which is (a) neither coerced nor imposed by man and (b) not commanded of God. Even the ethnic Jews today, in their 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia, maintain that a *freewill offering* was simply "a term applied to gifts presented out of the benevolence or religious impulse of heart of the giver, and not in fulfillment of any obligation, promise, or vow." This is in keeping with passages like:

- **Exodus 35:29** The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.
- **Psalms 54:6** I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O LORD; for [it is] good.
- **Leviticus 22:18-23** Speak unto Aaron, and to his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them, Whatsoever [he be] of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, that will offer his oblation for all his vows, and for all his freewill offerings, which they will offer unto the LORD for a burnt offering...; 21 And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish [his] vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein. 23 Either a bullock or a lamb that hath any thing superfluous or lacking in his parts, that mayest thou offer [for] a freewill offering; but for a vow it shall not be accepted.

What is in mind is a *voluntary action*; yet, we need to consider whether a voluntary action ordained of God is the same as having free-will. We see that it is not when we keep in mind such verses as **Psalm 110:3** *Thy people [shall be] willing in the day of thy power...*; **Hebrews 13:20-21** *Now the God of peace... Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight...*; and, again, **Philippians 2:13** *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure.*

Note that in **Psalm 110:3** (*Thy people [shall be] willing in the day of thy power...*) the word *willing* is *Nēdabah* – H5071 – נָדָבָה (*nēdabah*). So if one wants to force the Arminian meaning of “freewill” on *Nēdabah* and *Nēdab* then we must read Psalm 110:3 as ‘*Thy people [shall be] FREE-WILLING in the day of thy power.*’ In which case, such an interpretation would still mean that free-will is something that results directly from the power, the effectual working, of God and not from the heart and mind of natural man. Yet once again, we know from the other verses quoted that God alone controls the will of man. So we see the total refutation of free-will religion and the complete affirmation of the absolutely, all-powerful, all-encompassing sovereignty of God.

The Arminian: You take this sovereignty thing too far. God is not in control of *everything*; some things really do *just happen*. Sure, he lets it happen but god would never ordain the sinful and evil things that people do nor would he ordain natural disasters and the like. If you say that god ordained all things, including all sin and calamity, then you make him a sinner!

The Christian: God is in control of every atom, thought, word, deed, and event. Not only did He ordain all that is good, but He ordained all that is sinful and calamitous as well. This does not make Him a sinner; it makes Him God, a real Sovereign. The Bible makes it clear that God is the Potter and we, humanity, are the clay. He shapes us, sculpts us, even molds us into vessels of wrath fitted for destruction or else vessels of mercy afore-prepared for glory – all depending upon His eternal purpose and decree. God is not a sinner but He uses our innate sin (especially our sinful wrath) to accomplish his purpose. That is why we read (most accurately in the KJV and YLT I believe):

- **Psalm 17:13-14** Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, [which is] thy sword. From men [which are] thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, [which have] their portion in [this] life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid [treasure]: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their [substance] to their babes.
- **Psalm 76:10** Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.
- **Isaiah 10:5-6** O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. 6 I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

Consider the following passages as they pertain to the active and righteous work of God in bringing about calamity and wickedness upon mankind (especially by use of sinful agents).

- **Zephaniah 1:12** And it shall come to pass at that time, [that] I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil [ra’ – lit. evil, wickedness, wicked, mischief, trouble, affliction, that which causes breaking / crushing / trembling, etc.];
- **Isaiah 45:5-6** “...That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that [there is] none beside me. I [am] the LORD, and [there is] none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil [ra’ – lit. evil, wickedness, wicked, mischief, trouble,

affliction, that which causes breaking / crushing / trembling, etc.]: I the LORD do all these [things].

- **Jeremiah 11:11** Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them.
- **Genesis 50:20** But as for you, ye thought evil against me; [but] God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as [it is] this day, to save much people alive.

In fact, the Bible is clear in various places that God *actively hardens* the hearts of the non-elect (as well as the elect during His appointed seasons) and ordains them to do injurious, sinful things.

- **Isaiah 63:17** O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, [and] hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.
- **Isaiah 44:18** They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; [and] their hearts, that they cannot understand.
- **John 12:40** He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.
- **Psalms 105:23-25** Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. 24 And he increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies. 25 He turned their heart to hate His people, to deal subtilly with His servants.
- **Isaiah 29:10** For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes; the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.
- **Ezekiel 14:9** And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the LORD have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.
- **1 Kings 22:23** Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.
- **Psalms 81:11-12** But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. 12 So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust; [and] they walked in their own counsels.
- **Isaiah 66:4** I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose [that] in which I delighted not.
- **Jeremiah 4:10** Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul.
- **2 Thessalonians 2:9** [Even him], whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.
- **Romans 11:7-9** What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. 8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. 9 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: 10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

- **Exodus 10:1** And the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and e heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him...
- **Romans 9:17-18** For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up [*see Exodus 9:16*], that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will [have mercy], and whom he will he hardeneth.
- **Deuteronomy 2:30** ...Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the LORD thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as [appeareth] this day.
- **Joshua 11:20** For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, [and] that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses.
- **Isaiah 13:17** Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and [as for] gold, they shall not delight in it. 18 [*Their*] bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children.
- **2 Samuel 12:11** Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give [them] unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst [it] secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.
 - **Note:** “*I will do this thing before all Israel*” is a prophecy concerning the sin of Absalom when he raped David’s concubines before Israel.
- **1 Kings 12:13-15** And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men’s counsel that they gave him; 14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father [also] chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. 15 Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.
- **Ezekiel 20:23-26** I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries; 24 Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers’ idols. 25 Wherefore I gave them also statutes [that were] not good, and judgments whereby they should not live; 26 And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through [the fire] all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I [am] the LORD.
- **Jeremiah 19:7-9** And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place; and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of them that seek their lives... And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them.

God is likewise in control of the lifespans of men. We hear many say concerning the death of someone, especially the young, “Oh how tragic a death; what great things they could have done if this thing did not take their life so early.” Such talk is foolishness because no one dies outside of the appointed time and the appointed time means that God has ordained it. There could be no “great things” because God never ordained such things. “*When*” a person dies and “*how*” a person dies is one-hundred percent in the Hand of the Lord; including those cases wherein the person dies at the hands of wicked men.

- **Job 14:1,5,14** Man [that is] born of a woman [is] of few days, and full of trouble...5 Seeing his days [are] determined, the number of his months [are] with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass: ...14 If a man die, shall he live [again]? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.
- **Job 7:1** [Is there] not an appointed time to man upon earth? [are not] his days also like the days of an hireling?
- **Isaiah 43:3-4** For I [am] the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt [for] thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. 4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.
- **Psalms 139:16** Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be (NIV).
- **Luke 12:20** But God said unto him, [Thou] fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

When we read of earthquakes, tsunamis, mass shootings, hurricanes, tornados, war, famine, pestilence, epidemics, and so on... we must bow to the truth that God has sent all of these things – as judgments, as warnings, as a hardening measure, and sometimes as the precursor to the salvation of an elect sinner or elect sinners (see the Philippian Jailor in **Acts 16:22-34**). For more on the overall and absolute sovereignty of God, consider:

- **Acts 15:8** Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.
- **Daniel 4:35** And all the inhabitants of the earth [are] reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and [among] the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?
- **Psalms 113:3** But our God [is] in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased.
- **Ecclesiastes 8:3-4** Be not hasty to go out of his sight: stand not in an evil thing; for He doeth whatsoever pleaseth him. 4 Where the word of a king [is, there is] power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?
- **Proverbs 16:33** The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof [is] of the LORD.
- **Proverbs 19:21** [There are] many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.
- **Ecclesiastes 3:11-15** He hath made every [thing] beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. 12 I know that [there is] no good in them, but for [a man] to rejoice, and to do good in his life. 13 And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it [is] the gift of God. I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth [it], that [men] should fear before him. 15 That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.
- **Romans 11:33-36** O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable [are] his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, [are] all things: to whom [be] glory for ever. Amen.
- **Isaiah 14:24-27** The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, [so] shall it stand: 25 That I will break the Assyrian in my

land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. 26 This [is] the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this [is] the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. 27 For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul [it]? and his hand [is] stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

- **Isaiah 42:8-9** I [am] the LORD: that [is] my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. 9 Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.
- **Isaiah 43:3-4** For I [am] the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt [for] thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. 4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

The Arminian: What about human responsibility?

The Christian: What about it? God commands and we are to obey. The fact that we cannot truly obey points us to our need for the Lord Jesus Christ. Those chosen in Him will believe and obey the Gospel by God's grace (which obedience can be summed up as loving, believing upon, and resting in Christ according to the scriptures). As for the law, Christ is the end of it – He is our obedience and sanctification if we are in Him. Christians work out the good works that God has afore-ordained for them; yet it is God that effectually works them out in us; we have no strength to act righteously outside of His eternal decree and power.

- **1 Corinthians 1:30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:
- **1 Peter 1:2** Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.
- **Ephesians 2:8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

As for the wicked, they are responsible for keeping the commands of God even though they cannot do it. Since they have no *perfect-law-keeping* Substitute, and since they outright reject the True One, they will be held fully accountable come Judgment Day “*knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified*” (Galatians 2:16). If you find fault with this precept – reread **Romans 9:18-24** and hear God's answer again.

The Arminian: I see that there is no getting through to you. I hope that anyone who hears this “gospel” of yours will reject it and believe the truth. I hope that they will pray to the lord so that he will hear and save them. Jesus will save all who desire to come to Him.

The Christian: Yes, God *will* save *all* who desire to come to Him; however, as we have seen, none desire to come to Him outside of His eternal decree and effectual working. As for praying to God; He only hears the prayers of His people, the elect. God does not (salvifically) hear the prayer of the non-elect, as per:

- **Jeremiah 11:14** Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear [them] in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble.
- **Ezekiel 8:18** Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, [yet] will I not hear them.
- **Psalms 109:6-7** Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand. 7 When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin.
- **Isaiah 1:15** And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.
- **Proverbs 1:24** Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; 25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; 27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. 28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me...
- **Proverbs 15:8** The sacrifice of the wicked [is] an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright [is] his delight.
- **Proverbs 28:9** He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer [shall be] abomination.
- **Proverbs 21:13** Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.
- **Isaiah 59:1-4** Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: 2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid [his] face from you, that he will not hear. 3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. 4 None calleth for justice, nor [any] pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.
- **Zechariah 7:13** Therefore it is come to pass, [that] as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts:
- **Micah 3:4** Then shall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them; he will even hide his face from them at that time....

On another note, do you not think it strange that your god would base all of eternity on a person's will. Think about it, what if a preacher or other witness caught someone at a bad time (they were sick, emotionally upset, angry...); don't we all have really bad days wherein we are not very receptive to new things? What if the preacher or teacher just wasn't very apt to preach or teach? What if there was a bit of a language barrier? What if the hearer had a bad experience with the last pastor/church they, or a loved one, attended? What if they suffered abuse at the hands of "missionaries" like so many indigenous people did or under the hands of perverted priests like so many Catholic youth did (and still do)? What if any one, or a combination, of these things put them off hearing the truth?

A sovereign God using these things to harden the heart of the wicked makes sense. However, if your god wants everyone saved... isn't it strange that he would base their salvation upon a will that can be so easily affected and undermined by any of the things I just mentioned? Just being born into one home and not another can create a huge advantage if salvation is based upon the will (which, of course, it is not); but can you not see how much harder it would be for a long-indoctrinated Chinese atheist, or Pashtun Muslim, or Yanomamo animist to "accept (freewill) Jesus" as compared to someone growing up in the

“bible belt.” The bottom-line is that those who make an idol out of the human will have absolutely no idea how the human will works; they have no idea how easily it can be altered by outside forces. Yes, God is in control; however, He works through means and anyone with a college level understanding of human psychology (often much less than that is needed) can tell you how easy it is to influence, manipulate, and override the will of another given enough time, technique, and effort. And yet you would have me to believe that it is this idol... this idol of the fallen human will that your god bases all of one’s eternal security upon? To me, that is the true monstrosity. I am thankful for a God who loved me enough to override my wicked will and draw me unto himself; I wish I was all the more thankful because it is madness just how comparatively little thankfulness I feel in my heart over the most blessed of mercies (i.e. compared to what I should be feeling...but God is gracious and loving towards His own and knows our feeble state).

The Arminian: Feel free to have the last word. All I can say at this point is that even though God gets all of the glory, I still have a free will and my coming to Christ was based upon my free will. God did not *force* me or anyone else to believe. Nonetheless, it is not our believing that saves us (as you imply that we say) but the blood of Christ and I still believe that the blood of Christ was shed for *everyone*.

The Christian: If, after all of the passages above, you still wish to hold to the erroneous notion of free-will (and the religion that flows from it)... do so; just note that it will be unto your eternal demise. Concerning your specific points: God cannot share His glory; either one’s salvation is one-hundred percent of God or else it is leavened with the works of man and thus it is no salvation at all (just a false refuge).

- **Isaiah 48:9-11** For my name’s sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off. 10 Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. 11 For mine own sake, [even] for mine own sake, will I do [it]: for how should [my name] be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.
- **Isaiah 42:6-8** I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; 7 To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, [and] them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. 8 I [am] the LORD: that [is] my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.
- **Romans 1:18-25** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed [it] unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, [even] his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified [him] not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

When you state that it is the blood of Christ that saves, something that I would normally affirm, with you I must ask the question: *Which Christ?* If it is the free-will “christ” that seeks everyone, loves everyone, died for everyone, *tries* to save everyone, but *fails* to save everyone from eternal damnation –

then that blood is unholy (common to all) and is impotent — it could not do that which this christ wanted it to do... which is to deliver everyone from hellfire. The blood of the true Christ saves all for whom it was shed.

You object to my assertion that those who hold to free-will make their belief (their man-mustered, carnal assent) their ultimate salvation, as opposed to the blood of Christ. Yet, you essentially admit this yourself. If the blood of your christ is shed for all, but cannot save all, something else makes the difference between Heaven and Hell. What is that something else? Why it's *your* acceptance, *your* believing, *your* faith, *your* will. It is a lie to say that you are saved by the blood of Christ when you really deny that His blood can save anyone. You simply believe that His blood made it possible for people to save themselves by accepting it (by putting yourself under the blood). This is blasphemy for all of the reasons discussed thus far.

As for God forcing His people to believe, this is an absolutely true statement if we define *forcing* as that process by which God:

- Reveals the truth of His Gospel to an *elect* sinner;
- Regenerates them, giving them a new heart and spirit;
- Gives them knowledge, wisdom, and understanding as He causes them to see their dire state without the Lord Jesus and their great need for Him;
- Draws their hearts unto Christ, causing them to seek after, desire after, and love Him (but only because He first sought, desired, and loved them);
- Gives them the gifts of faith and repentance as He effectually works in them causing them to believe and turn to Him;
- Keeps them, upholds them, guides them, and ordering their steps as He works out in them the good works He has prepared for them from before the world was.

If you wish to call this forcing then *yes*, this is the kind of forcing that all true Christians love and rejoice in. This is the *forcing* that took us from being children of wrath by nature, dead in trespasses and sin, walking in darkness, being sold to sin and made us *willing* children of God. I reiterate, if God did not make me willing in the day of His power (Psalm 110:3) and drag me (Helkuo – John 6:44) unto Christ then I would have had no hope of salvation. Never could I have turned to the True God of my own strength because all of my carnal strength and will was against Him by nature.

Here's another thought; when a loved one of a will-worshiper has gone astray, will they not cry out to their god to save that person? You can hear Arminians, Sacramentalists, and Semipelagians all over the world cry out to their notion of jesus to save their wayward children, to cause their abusive/adulterous spouses to repent, to "open their eyes" to christ so that they can "trust him." Such prayers are essentially requests for their god to override the will of their loved ones and to basically "force them" see the light. Those who hold to this folly will pray as such for others but will cling to their religious free-will in their own lives with the tightest grip possible (one that only God can break). They speak of the sanctity of free-will and of how much god cherishes it – but they have no qualms about praying to their god to override it in others. This is sheer hypocrisy!

The true Christian longs for God to overcome their will. They do not want to be left to their own (natural) devises. The Christian *wants* God's will to be done and finds comfort in knowing that it is *always being done*, in all aspects, of all things, in this creation. The Christian wants His will destroyed so that he or she can be more and more conformed to the image of Christ. They rest knowing that neither their salvation, nor the salvation of their loved ones, lies in anything that they can think, say, and do (for right thinking, saying, and doing are all the fruit of salvation and not the cause or maintainer of it). They rest upon Christ and His finished work alone as their only hope!

From the Bible, we are given no reason to believe that any of the following would have turned to God of their own self-will:

- **Abram** (an idolater, as per Joshua 24:2-3, 15, before God called him; his name was eventually changed to Abraham)
- **Saul of Tarsus** (the killer of Christians before becoming an Apostle after the events in Acts 22:3-15);
- **Manasseh** (one of, if not the most manifestly wicked kings of Israel as per 2 Kings 21:1-9);
- **The Philippian Jailor** (Acts 16:22-34);
- **The malefactor on the cross** (Matthew 27:44, Mark 15:31-32, and Luke 23:39-43); and
- **The various demon-possessed individuals that the Lord saved** (Mary Magdalene per Luke 8:1-3; the Gadarene per Luke 8:26-39; the possessed child per Luke 9:37-42; etc.

Take the Apostle Paul; in **1 Timothy 1:15-16** we read *“This [is] a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.”* The experience of the Apostle Paul is set forth as a pattern (literally as *an example / sketch / outline / brief exposition*) of the salvation of rebellious, wretched, (but nevertheless) *elect* sinners by the sovereign grace and mercy of God. The *essence* of what Saul experienced is what all believers experience upon regeneration.

We see that Saul was the experimental enemy of both God and His people before God saved Him (though he was beloved, elected, predestinated, called, justified, and glorified *in Christ* from eternity). As “Saul of Tarsus,” he was murderously set upon persecuting the church. He was on the very path, the very road, to doing just that as he headed to Damascus. Not all of the unregenerate are as outwardly and violently hateful towards Christ and His body but they all harbor that same innate hatred nonetheless. But what happened to Saul? The Lord Jesus “happened.” He did not wait for Saul to accept Him into his heart, make a decision for him, say the “sinner’s prayer,” or any other such foolishness. Instead, the Lord Jesus Christ took the initiative and intervened in the life of this man, unto his salvation. The Lord sought and saved Saul when Saul did not believe the Lord; did not desire after the Lord; did not seek the Lord; and did not love the Lord. Saul’s self-will not only ‘failed to cooperate with God’ but was dead set against Him. Saul was headed straight to Hell but for the intervening and overriding grace of God.

In **Acts 22:6** we read that a great light shone about Saul. This is a picture of all Christians seeing the Light upon their quickening. This typifies the Gospel light shining in their hearts upon salvation “...for God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (**2 Corinthians 4:6**). However, the non-elect do not see this light because “...the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (**2 Corinthians 4:4**).

In **Acts 22:7**, the Lord said unto Saul “*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*” This is a picture of the Lord revealing to us our sinful nature and how the course of our lives has been, up until the point of regeneration and conversion, one of enmity and hatred towards God. In **Acts 22:8** we see that the Lord revealed Himself by name to Saul and Saul heard and understood Him. **John 10:27** declares “*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*” However, in **Acts 22:9** we see that the non-elect around Saul did not hear the voice of God; this is in keeping with both **John 8:47** “*He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear [them] not, because ye are not of God*” and **John 8:43** “*Why do ye not understand my speech? [even] because ye cannot hear my word.*” The wicked saw the light and were afraid. The world sees the change in Christians upon regeneration and conversion for “*[they] are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid*” (**Matthew 5:14**) and the world becomes

afraid also — to one degree or another. However, as it pertains to salvation, their ability to see the light was meaningless without them hearing the Voice. The Voice was not meant for them, it was not spoken to them, so they could not hear it.

In **Acts 22:10** we see the Lordship of Christ acknowledged in the heart of Saul. Saul calls his former Enemy *Lord* and seeks to know His will for Him. This is the disposition of all of the children of god when their heart is made sensitive to the presence and sovereignty of God.

We see that the Lord told Saul to Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. Arise, *anistēmi*, the same word used for arising from the dead during resurrection is used by God as a command to Saul. God commands all of his people to arise; He does this spiritually by quickening His people but does so experimentally by causing us to walk in this newness of resurrected life. When God saves a person, He gives them a sight of their sin. For some, it is a powerful and debilitating sight. For others, it is not as tempestuous – but it is enough. All Christians will see their helplessness, their great spiritual impotence. They will see their own natural wretchedness and will quickly dismiss the false notion that they could have ever chosen the True Christ or “made a decision for Him.” Knowing themselves, they know that if God did not step in and do for them what they could never have done for themselves (nor ever could have willed to do for themselves), they would have continued on a course set straight for Hell. Yet God commands that we arise from the depths of our felt sense and sight of sin as He turns us to serve Him, love Him, worship Him, and adore Him with praise and thanksgiving. Even as a Christian, there will be many a season wherein God reveals to us our natural state but we are never to be content to wallow therein; we are exhorted to look to the glory of Christ and trust in Him for all things – including our righteousness, sanctification, hope, joy, and peace.

Closing Points

The truths related to the free and sovereign grace of God are not simply matters of the intellect; they are not merely points to be discussed and debated. These are Gospel matters, spiritual life and death matters that go to the very heart of true salvation – and true salvation is based *solely* upon the sovereign will, purpose, grace, mercy, and work of God. This salvation is a *heart* salvation, a *spiritual-essence* salvation and a very *real* salvation indeed; everything else is sinking sand. If you cannot thank God that He is absolutely sovereign in the electing, predestinating, seeking, calling, drawing, regenerating, converting, and keeping of all whom He purposed to save – then, as of yet, you do not know God.

You can speak about the blood of Christ all you wish but all you do is tread upon it and count it common (unholy) if you dare to say that it *cannot* and *does not* save all for whom it was shed. You can speak of “Christ as Victor” but if a great multitude for whom he died still ends up in Hell, your christ is an abject failure. If your god values your sinful *will* more than your eternal *well-being* then he does not value you at all. If your christ loves someone today, but not after their death tomorrow... and they burn for all eternity... what worth has such a love? It is worthless.

Therefore, if you wish to cling to a god and christ that wants to save all but *can't* save all; that *died* for all but failed to give spiritual *life* to all; that loves all but will not pray for, or deliver all – then so be it. If you want to cling to an idol that bases salvation upon the weakest, most malleable aspect of mankind (the fallen will) – that is your God-ordained choice. All I can do is warn you... if God does not intervene, if He does not step in and override your natural will; if He does not save you from your own foolish and rebellious thoughts, then He will say to you on that great and terrible day *Depart from me, I never knew you*. It doesn't matter how religious you are, how much you attend church, what position you hold in your church, how much you claim to love and serve the Lord... if your god is one that cannot save all for whom he died to save – your god is no god at all and your refuge is an eternal lie; it will never protect you from the overflowing scourge (**Isaiah 28:14-15**).

The God and Christ of the true Christian, however, is *truly* blessed. He does for them what they could never do for themselves. If there was no divine election then there would be no hope for them. They are naturally empty and broken, full of sin, and could never come to Christ. Those who know their spiritual plagues and the depths of their iniquities know that the dead cannot raise themselves to seek Jesus nor can the Mephibosheths, the *lame on both feet*, get up and run to him for salvation (we must be raised up and carried by Him and to Him). Thank God for a true salvation – a salvation based upon true love, true mercy, true grace, and true redemption. What freedom to know that all is in His hands and that He works all things for our good. What comfort to know that nothing depends upon anything we must muster-up in our own carnal strength. The true God alone is a God worth worshiping – and the true God is a sovereign, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent God that does *everything* according to His own pleasure and will. He does all things for our eternal good and for His eternal glory. He alone is to be believed and worshiped and we should never countenance, not even for a second, the multitude of freewill counterfeits that plague our lands.

To the True and Living God alone be the glory!

Amen.