

“Whosoever Will”
Romans 9:30-10:21
Dr. Jerry Nelson

Appendices:

“Compatibalism” by John Frame

“Free Will” by John W. Hendryx

“Freedom of the Will” by R.C. Sproul.

“Are There Two Wills in God?” by John Piper (*Divine Election and God's Desire for All to Be Saved.*)

If God has saved you, if you are trusting in Jesus Christ as your saving-Lord, will God continue to keep you through the hardest times of life and will he definitely take you to be with him when you die?

In Romans 8 Paul declared that those God calls to himself he will most assuredly finally and fully save.

8:29-30 “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son... And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.”

Paul wants those who belong to God to have absolute confidence in God’s desire and ability to truly save them and grant them life now and in the presence of God forever!

He assures Christians at the end of that chapter that nothing can separate them from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

As I said last week, there is however a problem that might cause us to doubt that keeping power of God?

The problem is with what happened to the Jews.

God made promises to the Jews in the OT and yet when the Messiah Jesus came most Jews didn’t respond to him.

It might appear that God’s promises to the Jews weren’t kept. And thus we might then doubt that God will keep his promises to us.

In Romans, chapters 9-11, Paul sets out to respond to this apparent problem.

And in the process, we are taught much about who is saved and how they are saved.

This becomes very practical because the issue is not only the Jews of Paul's day but us as well; who and how **anyone** is saved even today.

In Romans 9 Paul gives his first explanation of how we can know that God's word did not fail the Jews and thus why we can trust him today.

Theologians call this first explanation, "unconditional election."

Paul said we erroneously think God chose all the Jews to be saved and that when they aren't saved, we conclude God failed.

But the point is that God didn't choose all the Jews.

Here's how Paul says it, 9:6-12 "For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children... In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring....in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls."

Paul makes the point that God has always and continues to choose specifically who he will save.

And also Paul points out that God's choice of who will be saved is not based on anything God sees or even foresees in the one being chosen.

The choice is based on God – his sovereign choice, uninfluenced by us.

Some wish to object to that by saying God is unfair, unjust, to choose this way.

But Paul has already demonstrated that everyone, because of our sinfulness and sin, deserves the justice of eternal punishment and the point here is not that God is being unjust but that God instead is being merciful.

That God would choose anyone is pure mercy and that he would choose me is reason for an eternity of praise.

But I won't re-preach Romans 9; you can read it for yourself.

As I said earlier, **In Romans 9 Paul gives his first explanation of why we can say God's word did not fail** because God never promised that he would save everyone.

But those he sovereignly and unconditionally elects to save based on his mercy, he saves and keeps and nothing can separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In chapter 9 Paul describes our salvation in terms of unconditional election by **Divine sovereignty**.

Now in chapter 10 to give us the second reason why God's word has not failed, Paul will describe salvation in terms of **human responsibility**.

What these two chapters together teach us is that God's unconditional election of us does not by itself save us.

God has ordained the beginning of our salvation by sovereignly electing who he would have mercy on and choose to save as we saw in chapter 9.

God has also ordained the end of our salvation by promising that those he elects will be his forever as we saw in chapter 8.

But God has not only ordained the beginning and the end, he has also ordained the means by which we are saved – grace through faith. We must believe.

And that is what we will see in chapter 10.

As I said earlier, just election, just God's choice of us, won't save us.

To be saved, to have a relationship with a righteous, holy God, we must also be righteous.

But back in Romans 3:10 we were taught: "There is no one righteous, not even one."

But God solved our problem: 3:21-22 "But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the

Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.”

Now here Paul says the reason there aren't many Jews in the church in Paul's day is not God's fault as if he were unjust.

The reason most Jews were not Christians is that they sought to gain their own righteousness, their own right standing with God, by keeping the law rather than accepting the righteousness of God freely made available to them in Christ.

And the reason why many **Gentiles were** in the church was because they didn't try to earn their righteousness by their efforts, but they gained their righteousness by faith, that is, they received the free gift of the righteousness of Jesus as their own and were thus counted righteous by God.

This is the greatest transaction in the history of mankind:

Jesus paid for our sins and he gave us his righteousness.

In 2 Corinthians 5:21 we read, “God made (Jesus) who had no sin to be sin for us, so that **in (Jesus)** we might become the righteousness of God.”

No listen to Paul write about this in Romans 9:30-10:4:

“What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹ but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. ³² Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the “stumbling stone (Jesus).” ³³ As it is written: “See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, (but) the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” ¹ Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. ² For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. ³ Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. ⁴ Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

As with many people today, most of the Jews thought they would be okay with God if they had done their best. “Surely God doesn't expect us to be perfect!”

But that is precisely what a HOLY God **does** expect.

Habakkuk 1:13 God, “your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.”

So God had made it abundantly clear in the OT that while obedience to the law was commanded of God’s people, they would **not** be able to perfectly obey it and so God established the entire sacrificial system.

The people knew that the sacrifices of bulls and goats could not actually clear them of their guilt for sin, but that somehow those sacrifices pointed to a way that God would eventually remove the guilt; they were to trust God to grant them righteousness.

But many of the Jews disregarded the issue of trust in God for righteousness and resorted to thinking they could earn sufficient righteousness by doing.

By Paul’s day, after the death and resurrection of Jesus, it should have been clear to everyone, Jews included, that Jesus was the fulfillment of the law – Jesus had kept the law perfectly and because of the OT prophecies, they should have known that Jesus was also the fulfillment of the OT sacrificial system – those OT sacrifices were pointing forward to Jesus’ death atoning for the sin of his people.

And therefore **his** righteousness is offered freely to all who will believe.

Paul then goes on in chapter 10:

10:5-13 “Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: “The man who does these things will live by them.”⁶ But the righteousness that is by faith says: “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down)⁷ “or ‘Who will descend into the deep?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).⁸ But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming:⁹ That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.¹¹ As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all

and richly blesses all who call on him,¹³ for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Paul says, don’t make gaining the righteousness you need so difficult as to be impossible.

The righteousness of God in Christ is not a matter of going somewhere or doing something difficult to gain it.

That righteousness, that you so desperately need to have a relationship with a holy God, is very near.

It does not require effort; it only requires faith, a trust in Jesus as saving-Lord of your life.

Now, please understand, there is no magic in saying the words “Jesus is Lord” or in merely mentally agreeing that Jesus rose from the dead.

The emphasis here is clearly on a heart change and a choice to trust in Jesus and be loyal to him.

And when we do embrace Jesus as saving-Lord of our lives, he grants to us his own righteousness making us completely and eternally acceptable to the Father God.

As we saw in Romans 3:22 “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.”

Or as Paul put it in verse 13, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

In these verses God says **we** have a responsibility; we must believe. If we don’t believe we won’t be saved.

Now listen to him in the latter verses of the chapter as he continues to lay the blame for Jews’ condemned condition, squarely at their own feet.

Romans 10:14-21 “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”¹⁶ **But not all the Israelites accepted the good news.** For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our message?”¹⁷ Consequently, faith comes

from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. ¹⁸ But I ask: **Did they not hear? Of course they did:** “Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.” ¹⁹ Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, “I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding.” ²⁰ And Isaiah boldly says, “I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me.” ²¹ **But concerning Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.”**

Here in chapter 10 Paul says God’s word or promises, did not fail.

Israel is lost because Israel refused the message; they are a disobedient and obstinate people.

Or to say it of us, the reason why anyone is condemned is not God’s fault, it is their own fault – they refuse the truth about God that God has made known to them.

No, God’s word did not fail the Jews and his word will not fail you.

If God has saved you, if you are trusting in Jesus Christ as your saving-Lord, God will continue to keep you through the hardest times of life and he will definitely take you to be with him when you die!

Now next week, in chapter 11, we will come back to the subject of Israel, the Jews.

But for the rest of our time today I want to speak to the compatibility of chapters 9 and 10, the compatibility of divine sovereignty in unconditional election and human responsibility.

We struggle with these two concepts because we want it all to fit perfectly together in our minds.

On the one hand **if** we emphasize divine sovereignty, we are tempted to say that if God does the choosing, if God elects who will be saved, then how can God hold anyone responsible?

And for that matter if it is all up to God, and God is sovereign, why pray or why evangelize, for that matter why do anything, after all, it’s all up to God?

Conversely, if we emphasize human responsibility, especially as popularly conceived as “free will,” I don’t know how any Christian could live with him or herself.

People are dying everyday without being Christians. They are going into an eternity of punishment for their sins.

If God has done all he’s going to do, then the fate of the world is now in our hands.

If it is now only up to us to tell the good news and to unbelievers to, of their own “free will” choose Jesus, why does not every Christian quit his job and spend 24/7 convincing people to trust Jesus?

Unless you have no compassion at all, how can you sit here?

But, from the Bible, we know that the apparently logical extremes of both positions are incomplete.

Let’s take the idea of divine sovereignty first.

As I said we are tempted to suggest that God’s sovereign unconditional election of who will be saved, means it is all up to God and so why do anything; why pray, evangelize or even live a holy life.

What we fail to take into account when we think like that is what we have already seen in Romans 9 and 10.

God not only determines who he will choose and who he will eventually taken to heaven, but he also determines that the means by which he would do that is our faith and obedience.

Yes, God chooses, but he also said that the way he would accomplish his purposes in those he chose is by grace through their faith.

God planned it so that we would be involved in the process of his saving us, not passive robots.

In Ephesians and elsewhere, we learn that God chose us before the foundation of the world.

But that doesn’t mean that God chose and then quit.

- Back in Romans 8:29-30 we saw already that God is active in every part of his plan for us: “those God foreknew he also predestined... And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.”
- And in Romans 10:14-15 we see that God has ordained sending, preaching, hearing, believing and calling on the name of Jesus as the means by which he will accomplish his purposes in us. “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent?”

Should we tell people about Jesus even though God has already chosen those to whom he will show his mercy?

Should we expect people to hear and believe the gospel and trust in Jesus to be saved even though God has already chosen who will be saved?

Yes and yes because God has prescribed the means as well as the end.

Do I pray for the lost?

Yes, first of all because I am commanded to pray.

And because prayer is one of the means by which God carries out his plan.

Listen to Paul in Romans 10:1 “Brothers, **my** heart’s desire and **prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.**”

Do I tell the good news of Jesus?

Yes, because I have been commanded to and, as we see in Romans 10:14-15, it is the means by which God carries out his plan.

Human responses to God’s election are not contradictions of divine sovereignty but are a part of it.

I pray for the lost, and our missionaries pray for the lost, because we do believe in God’s sovereign election of who will be saved.

Why would we pray if we believed it was now only up to the individual to decide.

But we do pray, because we want God to act, we want God to open their blind eyes, we want God to do something in them that only he can do.

We don't leave it to "free will," we want God to move them.

And we share the gospel with unbelievers, and our missionaries are doing so throughout the world, because we believe in God's sovereign election of who will be saved.

We know that evangelism would be pointless if God didn't act.

But God has said that he will effectively call those whom he has chosen.

We don't have to wonder if God will save those whom he has chosen, we know he will and wonder of wonder he has called us to be part of that process.

One theologian wrote, "When God effects (brings to pass) his work of faith in us, he does not do so without us but by us. Certainly he does not simply give it to us to accomplish, as the Jews thought. That would be to demand the impossible. But in giving it to us to accomplish, he gives us at the same time the wherewithal to accomplish it..." (A. Vanhoye In D.A. Carson *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility*, p192)

What I find very interesting and instructive is that Paul sees no contradiction between teaching both the divine sovereignty of God in his unconditional election of those he will save in chapter 9 **and** the full responsibility of human beings for their own lost condition in chapter 10.

He teaches them both boldly and strongly and without any embarrassment over any apparent contradiction.

With a lesser mind than the apostle Paul, I too must accept the these two truths.

But there is something that still bothers us about this idea of divine sovereignty in unconditional election – God's choice of who he will show mercy to.

We think it violates our free will.

I have already acknowledged that I cannot conceive a fully satisfying answer to what appears to us to be something of a contradiction between divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

I must simply accept that both are true because God says they are.

But I think I can demonstrate that Paul's teaching of the two truths in Romans 9 and 10, even with the unanswered questions, is far more satisfying than the popular idea of "free will."

Even many Christians camp on this idea of "free will."

John Piper wrote, "When I entered seminary I believed in the freedom of my will, in the sense that it was ultimately self-determining. I had not learned this from the Bible; I absorbed it from the independent, self-sufficient, self-esteeming, self-exalting air that you and I breathe every day of our lives in America. **The sovereignty of God meant that he can do anything with me that I give him permission to do.** With this frame of mind I entered (seminary)...

"In the class on salvation we dealt head on with the doctrines of unconditional election and irresistible grace... Emotions run high when you feel your man-centered world crumbling around you. I met (the professor) in the hall one day. After a few minutes of heated argument about the freedom of my will, I held a pen in front of his face and dropped it to the floor. Then I said, with not as much respect as a student ought to have, "I [!] dropped it." Somehow that was supposed to prove that my choice to drop the pen was not governed by anything but my sovereign self.

But thanks be to God's mercy and patience, at the end of the semester I wrote in my blue book for the final exam, "Romans 9 is like a tiger going about devouring free-willers like me." That was the end of my love affair with human autonomy and the ultimate self-determination of my will. My worldview simply could not stand against the scriptures, especially Romans 9." (from a sermon delivered on Nov 3, 2002 available at DesiringGod.org)

The answer to the question of whether we have "free will" or not requires that we define the term.

And when we do, it will reveal that the concept is a kind of fiction.

For your will to be “free” it must mean that your ability to choose one thing over another is completely free.

To be completely free would mean that it is not influenced in any way by any thing outside of you or for that matter even anything in you.

Now think about that for a minute.

A famous illustration of this is of the free-willed mule.

The mule’s owner puts a pail of wheat on the left of the mule and a pail of oats on the right.

If the mule were not influenced in any way by hunger, by appearance, by memory, or by anything else, it would starve. (Sproul, *Chosen by God*, 53)

There would be no motivation, no desire to choose one over the other.

You see, without some influence there would be no desire, and with no desire there would be no ability to make a choice.

But if your will is influenced then by definition it is not completely “free.”

That influence might be someone holding a gun to your head or it might be something as unseen as the impact your parents had on you when you were a child.

But if anything is influencing you then you are not actually free.

And as we will see in a minute, it is impossible not to be influenced.

That is why I call “free will” a kind of fiction.

So instead of “free will” maybe we should call it what it is, the ability to choose.

Jonathan Edwards called it “the mind choosing.”

And we do make choices every day.

But don’t suggest those choices aren’t influenced.

Now of course there are choices we make that have no significance.

It would be like John Piper choosing to drop the pen or not just to prove he has something he then called “free will.”

I think it takes a fair amount of premeditation to choose for no reason, because most of our choices are driven by something within us or outside of us that influences our decision.

But I have to admit that it is possible that we could decide to make a choice based on nothing at all – we have the freedom to drop the pen or not drop the pen.

But such choices are irrelevant and have no moral significance.

So back to the important things of life, we must keep in mind that we make our choices based on what we most desire

In fact any choice we make is determined by the strongest desire at the moment.

One man illustrates it this way: We want to lose weight and decide to diet. We do well until hunger becomes a stronger inclination than our desire to lose weight. We choose based on the strongest desire. (iSproul, *Grace Unknown*, 131))

In fact if you think about it, it is impossible for you to choose what you don't desire.

Yes, we make choices but our choices are based on our strongest desires.

So your choices are **free** because you make them (no one else coerced you) AND your choices are **determined** because they are driven by your desires. (Sproul, *Chosen by God*, 54)

Now let's talk about spiritual ability.

When it comes to spiritual ability, the ability to have a positive relationship with God, **the problem is with my desires**. (Sproul, *Chosen by God*, 61)

We will hear it said of a non-Christian that he or she is basically good, he wants to do the right thing, she wants to do good, or they are seeking God.

But what does God say?

Romans 3:10-12 "There is no one righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands, no one who seeks

God. ¹² All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

Now we know that unsaved people do what we would call “good” things - People can be kind, even generous, and amazingly so.

But God considers not only the action but also the motives of the heart.

And even the best thing done while a person is alienated from God, is not deemed “good” by God.

Isaiah 64:6 “all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.”

God says we are sinners and nothing we do is spiritually good, in the sight of our God.

Genesis 6:5 “The LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.”

We still choose what we desire but our desires are for ourselves. We don’t desire God.

In The Fall we lost all desire for God and all ability to be pleasing to God.

The Bible says In Ephesians 2:1-3 that we were “dead in our transgressions and sins...Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.”

“By nature” means that it is our very nature now to sin and we are dead, morally incapable, of desiring or doing anything acceptable to God.

Yes, the non-Christian has the freedom to choose

He is capable of choosing many things, but the Bible says that he is incapable of choosing to do anything righteous by God’s standard.

He has freedom to act but only within the bounds of his moral nature.

The non-Christian is not free to follow God, nor does he want to.

Now here is the gospel – God will supernatural intervene by his Spirit through regeneration and effectual calling to give the non-Christian the desire and the ability to believe and follow Christ.

God gives us a new desire – God changes the influences.

In that God gives us a new freedom, we now choose to trust and obey God for God's glory.

And when God puts that desire there, a man must, by definition, follow his strongest desire, and he will then choose God.

When we pray for a non-Christian, what are we expecting God to do?

We want God to tip the scales in the person's mind so that their desire for God will be greater than their desire for self and they will choose God.

We don't want God to leave the person to what we in error call their "free" will.

We want God to change their desire giving them a new choice.

Yes, Romans 9, God chooses us, and yes, Romans 10, we must choose God – and God gives us the desire and ability to do so.

So what do we have in Romans 9 and 10?

We have the clear teaching that for nothing seen or foreseen in us, neither our efforts nor even our faith, God sovereignly chooses to whom he will show his mercy and elects them to eternal life – it is by grace we are saved!

And the appropriate response: Praise God for his mercy and grace. Do you?

And secondly, we have the clear teaching that everyone who spends eternity in what Jesus called "the lake of fire," will do so because he or she is a willful sinner, refusing the truth about God that God has made plain to them.

And the appropriate response: "if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved... Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Will you?

Additional note on the passages that speak of God's will that no one perish and that everyone be saved.

Another objection that people often raise to the idea of unconditional election is that some verses in Scripture appear at first glance to contradict it. But they do not.

1 Timothy 2:3-4, "This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.
2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance

The words "wants" or "wanting" in these verses speak of the will of God – what God wants.

Now again we have to define our terms and use them consistently.

There are three different ways to think of God's will:

1. Do the Apostles Paul and Peter mean the sovereign will of God, the decreed will of God?

Is this God's will as when he said let there be light and there was light? The light had no choice in the matter.

If that is the meaning here then this verse says more than most people want it to say – it would mean that God has decreed that no one will in fact perish and that all will be saved.

But we know from the rest of Scripture that cannot be true.

2. The second way to think of the will of God is to think of his perceptive will – the commands of God. God said you shall not steal.

That doesn't mean we can't steal but that we shouldn't steal.

But if we apply that definition, we come up with nonsense statements. For then we would be saying that God commands no one to perish.

3. The third way to speak of God's will, is to speak of his desire, of what pleases him.

In Ezekiel 18:23 God says, "Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? NO!

God is not sadistic or malevolent.

These verses don't contradict "unconditional election" they in fact corroborate it saying what God says in Micah 7:18 He "delights to show mercy."

These verses are speaking of God's heart, his heart of compassion.

John M. Frame on "Compatibalism"

(God's determining and Man's free will are compatible):

Compatibilism maintains that people are free to do what they desire to do. "Adam before the Fall acted according to his desires, which then were godly. After the fall, sinners still act according to their desires, but those desires are sinful. The redeemed are enabled by God's grace, and progressively, to desire things which are excellent; and they are free to act according to those desires. The glorified saints in heaven will have only pure desires, and they will act in accordance with those... "If we have difficulty here, it may be because we fail to understand the nature of the sinner's bondage. It is a moral and spiritual bondage, not a metaphysical, physical or psychological bondage. If, as in my robot-machine illustration, someone is physically forced to do something he doesn't want to do, then of course his bondage removes his responsibility for the act. Confronted with his "deed," the person would have a valid excuse: "I couldn't help it; I was physically forced to do it." But imagine someone coming before a human judge and saying, to excuse himself of a crime, "I couldn't help it, your honor; I was forced to do it by my nature. Since birth I've just been a rotten guy!" Surely there is something ironic about appealing to depravity to excuse depraved acts! If our defendant really is a "rotten guy," then, far from being an excuse, that is all the more reason

to lock him up! My point, then, is that although physical (and some other kinds of) bondage can furnish valid excuses for otherwise bad actions, moral bondage is *not* such an excuse. I can't imagine anyone disputing that proposition once they understand it." John M. Frame http://www.frame-poythress.org/frame_articles/1993FreeWill.htm

One of the best statements on compatibilism is from John Calvin:

"...we allow that man has choice and that it is **self-**determined, so that if he does anything evil, it should be imputed to him and to his own voluntary choosing. We do away with coercion and force, because this contradicts the nature of the will and cannot coexist with it. We deny that choice is free, because through man's innate wickedness it is of necessity driven to what is evil and cannot seek anything but evil. And from this it is possible to deduce what a great difference there is between necessity and coercion. For we do not say that man is dragged unwillingly into sinning, but that because his will is corrupt he is held captive under the yoke of sin and therefore of necessity will in an evil way. For where there is bondage, there is necessity. But it makes a great difference whether the bondage is voluntary or coerced. We locate the necessity to sin precisely in corruption of the will, from which follows that it is self-determined. (John Calvin from [Bondage and Liberation of the Will](#), pg. 69-70)

John W. Hendryx on "Free Will"

http://www.monergism.com/directory/link_category/Free-Will/Essays/
 "Many persons naturally assume that man has a free will. But what do they mean by this? You may want to ask them to define terms by asking, "Free from what?" "Free from sin?", "Free from God's decree?" No, neither. So what do people actually mean when they claim man has a free will? Perhaps many persons mean to say that man is free from external coercion. In this we all can agree, but just because someone is free from coercion does not mean his will is free. There are other ways in which man's will is not free. If the

natural man make choices BY NECESSITY then he also lacks a kind of freedom. We might want to consider whether the Bible uses the expression 'freedom' to describe any fallen man. And the answer is no, not UNTIL Christ sets us free (Rom 6). Jesus says that prior to grace, persons are 'slaves to sin'. And, last time I looked, a slave is not free. If man is in bondage to a corruption of nature, as the Scripture attests, then he is not, in any sense, free as the Bible defines it. That is, until the grace of God in Christ sets him free. It would be correct to say man HAS A WILL and that his choices are VOLUNTARY (not coerced) but this does not make the choices free. Fallen man chooses sin of NECESSITY due to a corruption of nature, and this is just as much a form of bondage of the will from which we need to be set free by Christ, and a more properly biblical way of expression. Just because we make these choices, of necessity, does not alleviate our responsibility. **If we borrow \$5 million and squander it in a week of wild living in Las Vegas [like our condition of debt after the fall], our inability to repay the debt does not alleviate us of any responsibility to do so (see Rom 3:20).** So I contend that whenever speaking about the concept of "free will," because of the confusion surrounding it, we should only define freedom as the Bible does: that man's will is not free, but rather is in bondage to sin. Clearly the Bible affirms that apart from a supernatural and merciful work of the Holy Spirit to change our naturally hostile disposition to God, no person would ever receive Christ (John 6:65). And Just as water does not rise above its source, so unspiritual men do not think or act spiritually (1 Cor 2:14).

Freedom of the Will by R.C. Sproul

“Does God’s foreknowledge eliminate human freedom? Does the immutability of God and the omniscience of God mean the end of all human freedom?”

If free human actions were not known in advance by God, then when He learned of them, He would undergo a change in His knowledge; He would learn something new. Here both immutability and omniscience would be compromised.

If human actions are known by God in advance, is it not certain that they will come to pass exactly as God has foreknown them? If God knows today what I will do tomorrow, then there is no doubt that when tomorrow comes, I will do

what God already knows I will do. With respect to the mind of God my future behavior is absolutely certain. But, does that mean that my future actions are absolutely determined or coerced by God?

God can know the future in more than one way. He can know the future because He has determined the future, or He can know it as a spectator. Consider the following analogy. Suppose you are standing at the corner of the roof atop a five-story building. As you look down to the street directly below, you see two runners on the sidewalk. One of them is approaching the edge of the building below you from south to north. The other runner is approaching the edge from west to east. They cannot see each other because their view is obscured by the building. From where you are standing you can see that the two runners are going to collide. You want to shout for them to stop, but you know it is too late. They are a split second away from crashing into each other. All you can do is stand helplessly waiting for the collision.

The analogy suggests a human way of knowing the future without causing or forcing the future to happen. (Of course, like any analogy, it is far from perfect. It is possible that one of the runners will step into a manhole just before he reaches the corner, or one might be vaporized by a laser gun at the last second. Our knowledge of the future in this case is not really certain.) The point of the analogy though, is simply to illustrate that **we can have knowledge of future events without causing those future events.**

Some have approached the subject of God's foreknowledge from a different perspective. Their argument is based on God's relationship to space and time. The idea is this: God is eternal; He is above space and time. God sees all things from the vantage point of the present. There is no past or future with God. He sees all things as present. If God sees all things as present, then how He does it is completely beyond our comprehension. What God's ultimate relationship to time is remains a highly speculative matter. If what is future to me is present to God, then we know His knowledge of our future is perfect and that future is absolutely certain. God can make no errors in His observations.

It is one thing to say that God causes or coerces all things. It is quite another to say that God foreordains all things. If God forces or coerces all things, then He would have had to coerce the fall of man. If this were so, then God would be the cause, indeed the guilty perpetrator of sin. Not only would God be guilty of sin but His coercive actions would destroy the freedom of man. To aid understanding we need to consider two models, two images of God, which lead to serious distortions of the divine character. First is the image of God as a *puppeteer*. Here God manipulates the strings of marionettes. The feet and the arms of the puppets jerk and dance as God pulls the strings. Puppets have no will. They have no heart or soul. Their bodies are filled with sawdust. If God were like this, not even the Wizard of Oz could make us truly free.

The second image of God is of the *spectator*. Here God sits on the sidelines of world history. He observes the game closely. He makes careful notes about the action and will turn in a scouting report. He is the ultimate armchair quarterback. He second-guesses the plays that are called. He roots for His favorite team. However, He is powerless to affect the outcome of the game in

any way. The action is on the field, and He's not playing. This model of God destroys His sovereignty. The spectator God is a God who reigns but never rules. He is a God without authority. He observes history but is not Lord over history.

Neither of these images does justice to the biblical view of God. They serve merely to alert us to the pitfalls that lurk in the shadows. They represent borders over which we must not go.

We must be careful not to so zealously maintain the sovereignty of God that we end up denying human freedom and responsibility. At the same time we must be careful not to so zealously preserve human freedom that we reduce God to an impotent spectator of world affairs.

The correct approach is to insist that God foreordains all things and that all future events are under His sovereignty. The future is absolutely certain to God. He knows what will take place, and He foreordains what will take place.

Foreordain does not mean coerce. It simply means that God wills that something take place. He may will future events through the free choices of creatures. This is the great mystery of providence - that God can will the means as well as the ends of future events. God can even will good through the wicked choices of men.

The greatest event of human history was at the same time the most diabolical. No greater shame can be tacked to the human race than that a human being delivered up Jesus to be crucified. Judas betrayed Christ because Judas wanted to betray Christ. The Pharisees pressed for His death because the Pharisees wanted Jesus killed. Pilate succumbed to the howling crowd, not because God coerced him, but because Pilate was too weak to withstand the demands of the mob.

Yet the Bible declares that the Cross was no accident. The outcome of God's eternal plan of redemption did not hinge finally on the decision of Pontius Pilate. What if Pilate had released Jesus and crucified Barabbas instead? Such a thought is almost unthinkable. It would suggest that God was only a spectator in the plan of redemption, that He hoped for the best but had no control over the events.

God did more than hope for the Cross. He willed the Cross. He sent His Son for that very purpose. Before Jesus was brought before Pilate, He pleaded with the Father for a different verdict. He begged that the cup might pass. Before Pilate ever raised his Roman scepter, the gavel had fallen in Gethsemane. The verdict was in. Jesus was delivered by the determinate forecounsel of God. Augustine said that "In a certain sense God wills everything that comes to pass." He ordains things with a view to human freedom. He does no violence to our wills by His sovereign ordination. He is not a spectator and we are not puppets. **His knowledge is certain, and our actions are free.**

How the providence of God works out these matters of concurrence is mysterious but not contradictory. There is nothing that is rationally incompatible about God's sovereignty and human freedom. Scripture clearly teaches that God is sovereign and that man is responsible. Neither teaching is false. I am not proposing that freedom and sovereignty are not contradictions simply because

the Bible teaches both. I am saying that the **two concepts are not contradictory because they are not mutually exclusive concepts. Divine sovereignty and human autonomy would be mutually exclusive.** If God is sovereign man could not be autonomous. If man is autonomous God could not be sovereign.

God is sovereign. Man is free. Man's freedom is limited, however, by God's sovereignty. God's sovereignty is not limited by man's freedom. This is simply to say that man is not God. God is free and man is free. But God is more free than a man. Man's freedom is always and everywhere subordinate to God's freedom. If we reverse these we pass from theism to atheism, from Christianity to humanism, from Christ to Anti-christ." (Sproul from *One Holy Passion*)

Are There Two Wills in God?

Divine Election and God's Desire for All to Be Saved

By John Piper January 1, 1995

http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Articles/ByDate/1995/1580_Are_There_Two_Wills_in_God/

My aim here is to show from Scripture that the simultaneous existence of God's will for "all persons to be saved" (1 Tim. 2:4) and his will to elect unconditionally those who will actually be saved is not a sign of divine schizophrenia or exegetical confusion. A corresponding aim is to show that unconditional election therefore does not contradict biblical expressions of God's compassion for all people, and does not nullify sincere offers of salvation to everyone who is lost among all the peoples of the world.

1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9, and Ezekiel 18:23 might be called the Arminian pillar texts concerning the universal saving will of God. In 1 Timothy 2:1-4 Paul says that the reason we should pray for kings and all in high positions is that this may bring about a quiet and peaceable life which "is good, and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who wills (*thelei*) all persons to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." In 2 Peter 3:8-9 the apostle says that the delay of the second coming of Christ is owing to the fact that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as a day. "The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not willing (*boulomenos*) that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." And in Ezekiel 18:23 and 32 the Lord speaks about his heart for the perishing: "Do I indeed delight in the death of the wicked, says the Lord GOD, and not rather in his turning from his way that he might live? . . . I do not delight (*Jehephoz*) in the death of the one who dies, says the Lord; so turn and live" (cf. 33:11).

It is possible that careful exegesis of 1 Timothy 2:4 would lead us to believe that "God's willing all persons to be saved" does not refer to every individual person in the world, but rather to all *sorts* of persons, since the "all

persons" in verse 1 may well mean groups like "kings and all in high positions" (v. 2). It is also possible that the "you" in 2 Peter 3:9 ("the Lord is longsuffering toward you, not wishing any to perish") refers not to every person in the world but to "you" professing Christians among whom, as Adolf Schlatter says, "are people who only through repentance can attain to the grace of God and to the promised inheritance."

Nevertheless the case for this limitation on God's universal saving will has never been convincing to Arminians and likely will not become convincing, especially since Ezekiel 18:23, 32 and 33:11 are even less tolerant of restriction. **Therefore as a hearty believer in unconditional, individual election I rejoice to affirm that God does not delight in the perishing of the impenitent, and that he has compassion on all people. My aim is to show that this is not double talk.**

The assignment in this chapter is not to defend the doctrine that God chooses unconditionally whom he will save. I have tried to do that elsewhere and others do it in this book. Nevertheless I will try to make a credible case that **while the Arminian pillar texts may indeed be pillars for universal love, nevertheless they are not weapons against unconditional election.** If I succeed then there will be an indirect confirmation for the thesis of this book. In fact I think Arminians have erred in trying to take pillars of universal love and make them into weapons against electing grace.

Affirming the will of God to save all, while also affirming the unconditional election of some, implies that there are at least "two wills" in God, or two ways of willing. It implies that God decrees one state of affairs while also willing and teaching that a different state of affairs should come to pass. This distinction in the way God wills has been expressed in various ways throughout the centuries. It is not a new contrivance. For example, theologians have spoken of sovereign will and moral will, efficient will and permissive will, secret will and revealed will, will of decree and will of command, decretive will and preceptive will, *voluntas signi* (will of sign) and *voluntas beneplaciti* (will of good pleasure), etc. Clark Pinnock refers disapprovingly to "the exceedingly paradoxical notion of two divine wills regarding salvation." In Pinnock's more recent volume (*A Case for Arminianism*) Randall Basinger argues that, "if God has decreed all events, then it must be that things *cannot* and *should* not be any different from what they are." In other words he rejects the notion that God could decree that a thing be one way and yet teach that we should act to make it another way. He says that it is too hard "to coherently conceive of a God in which this distinction really exists" In the same volume Fritz Guy argues that the revelation of God in Christ has brought about a "paradigm shift" in the way we should think about the love of God—namely as "more fundamental than, and prior to, justice and power." This shift, he says, makes it possible to think about the "will of God" as "delighting more than deciding." God's will is not his sovereign purpose which he infallibly establishes, but rather "the desire of the lover for the beloved." The will of God is his general intention and longing, not his effective purpose. Dr. Guy goes so far as to say, "Apart from a predestinarian presupposition, it becomes apparent that

God's 'will' is always (sic) to be understood in terms of intention and desire [as opposed to efficacious, sovereign purpose]."

These criticisms are not new. Jonathan Edwards wrote 250 years ago, "The Arminians ridicule the distinction between the secret and revealed will of God, or, more properly expressed, the distinction between the decree and the law of God; because we say he may decree one thing, and command another. And so, they argue, we hold a contrariety in God, as if one will of his contradicted another."

But in spite of these criticisms the distinction stands, not because of a logical or theological deduction, but because it is inescapable in the Scriptures. The most careful exegete writing in Pinnock's *Case for Arminianism* concedes the existence of two wills in God. I. Howard Marshall applies his exegetical gift to the Pastoral Epistles. Concerning 1 Timothy 2:4 he says, "To avoid all misconceptions it should be made clear at the outset that the fact that God wishes or wills that all people should be saved does not necessarily imply that all will respond to the gospel and be saved. *We must certainly distinguish between what God would like to see happen and what he actually does will to happen, and both of these things can be spoken of as God's will.* The question at issue is not whether all will be saved but whether God has made provision in Christ for the salvation of all, provided that they believe, and without limiting the potential scope of the death of Christ merely to those whom God knows will believe.

In this chapter I would now like to undergird Marshall's point that "we must certainly distinguish between what God would like to see happen and what he actually does will to happen, and [that] both of these things can be spoken of as God's will." Perhaps the most effective way to do this is to begin by drawing attention to the way Scripture portrays God willing something in one sense which he disapproves in another sense. Then, after seeing some of the biblical evidence, we can step back and ponder how to understand this in relation to God's saving purposes.

Illustrations of Two Wills in God:

The Death of Christ

The most compelling example of God's willing for sin to come to pass while at the same time disapproving the sin is his willing the death of his perfect, divine Son. The betrayal of Jesus by Judas was a morally evil act inspired immediately by Satan (Luke 22:3). Yet in Acts 2:23 Luke says, "This Jesus [was] *delivered up according to the definite plan (boule) and foreknowledge of God.*" The betrayal was sin, and it involved the instrumentality of Satan; but it was part of God's ordained plan. That is, there is a sense in which God willed the delivering up of his Son, even though the act was sin. Moreover Herod's contempt for Jesus (Luke 23:11) and Pilate's spineless expediency (Luke 23:24) and the Jews' "Crucify! Crucify him!" (Luke 23:21) and the Gentile soldiers' mockery (Luke 23:36) were also sinful attitudes and deeds.

Yet in Acts 4:27-28 Luke expresses his understanding of the sovereignty of God in these acts by recording the prayer of the Jerusalem saints:

Truly in this city there were gathered together against thy holy servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel to do *whatever thy hand and thy plan (boule) had predestined to take place.*

Herod, Pilate, the soldiers and Jewish crowds lifted their hand to rebel against the Most High only to find that their rebellion was unwitting (sinful) service in the inscrutable designs of God.

The appalling death of Christ was the will and work of God the Father. Isaiah wrote, "We esteemed him stricken, *smitten by God . . . It was the will of the LORD to bruise him; he has put him to grief*" (Isaiah 53:4,10). God's will was very much engaged in the events that brought his Son to death on the cross. God considered it "fitting to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:10). Yet, as Jonathan Edwards points out, Christ's suffering "could not come to pass but by sin. For contempt and disgrace was one thing he was to suffer."

It goes almost without saying that God wills obedience to his moral law, and that he wills this in a way that can be rejected by many. This is evident from numerous texts: "Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the *will (thelema) of my Father* who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). "Whoever does *the will of my Father* in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother" (Matthew 12:50). "The one who does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:17). The "will of God" in these texts is the revealed, moral instruction of the Old and New Testaments, which proscribes sin. Therefore we know it was *not* the "will of God" that Judas and Pilate and Herod and the Gentile soldiers and the Jewish crowds disobey the moral law of God by sinning in delivering Jesus up to be crucified. But we also know that it *was* the will of God that this come to pass. Therefore we know that God in some sense wills what he does not will in another sense. I. Howard Marshall's statement is confirmed by the death of Jesus: "We must certainly distinguish between what God would like to see happen and what he actually does will to happen."

The War Against the Lamb

There are two reasons that we turn next to Revelation 17:16-17. One is that the war against the Son of God, which reached its sinful climax at the cross comes to final consummation in a way that confirms what we have seen about the will of God. The other reason is that this text reveals John's understanding of God's active involvement in fulfilling prophecies whose fulfillment involves sinning. John sees a vision of some final events of history:

And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the harlot; they will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and giving over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled (Revelation 17:16-17).

Without going into all the details of this passage, the relevant matter is clear. The beast "comes out of the abyss" (Revelation 17:8). He is the personification of evil

and rebellion against God. The ten horns are ten kings (v. 12) and they "wage war against the Lamb" (v. 14).

Waging war against the Lamb is sin and sin is contrary to the will of God. Nevertheless the angel says (literally), "God gave into their [the ten kings'] hearts *to do his will*, and to perform one will, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled" (v. 17). Therefore God willed (in one sense) to influence the hearts of the ten kings so that they would do what is against his will (in another sense).

Moreover God did this in fulfillment of prophetic words. The ten kings will collaborate with the beast "until the words of God shall be fulfilled" (v. 17). This implies something crucial about John's understanding of the fulfillment of "the prophecies leading up to the overthrow of Antichrist." It implies that (at least in John's view) God's prophecies are not mere predictions which God knows will happen, but rather are divine intentions which he makes sure will happen. We know this because verse 17 says that *God is acting* to see to it that the ten kings make league with the beast "until the words of God shall be fulfilled." John is exulting not in the marvelous foreknowledge of God to predict a bad event. Rather he is exulting in the marvelous sovereignty of God to make sure that the bad event comes about. Fulfilled prophecy, in John's mind, is not only prediction, but also promised performance.

This is important because John tells us in his Gospel that there are Old Testament prophecies of events surrounding the death of Christ that involve sin. This means that God intends to bring about events that involve things he forbids. These events include Judas' betrayal of Jesus (John 13:18; Psalm 41:9), the hatred Jesus received from his enemies (John 15:25; Psalm 69:4; 35:19), the casting of lots for Jesus' clothing (John 19:24; Psalm 22:18), and the piercing of Jesus' side (John 19:36-37; Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:20; Zechariah 12:10). John expresses his theology of God's sovereignty with the words, "These things happened *in order that* the scripture be fulfilled." In other words the events were not a coincidence that God merely foresaw, but a plan which God *purposed* to bring about. Thus again we find the words of I. Howard Marshall confirmed: "We must certainly distinguish between what God would like to see happen and what he actually does will to happen."

The Hardening Work of God

Another evidence to demonstrate God's willing a state of affairs in one sense that he disapproves in another sense is the testimony of Scripture that God wills to harden some men's hearts so that they become obstinate in sinful behavior which God disapproves.

The most well known example is the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. In Exodus 8:1 the Lord says to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Let my people go, that they may serve me."'" In other words God's command, that is, his *will*, is that Pharaoh let the Israelites go. Nevertheless from the start he also willed that Pharaoh *not* let the Israelites go. In Exodus 4:21 God says to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in your hand; but *I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.*" At one point Pharaoh himself acknowledges that his

unwillingness to let the people go is sin: "Now therefore forgive, I pray, my sin" (Exodus 10:17). Thus what we see is that God commands that Pharaoh do a thing which God himself wills not to allow. The good thing that God commands he prevents. And the thing he brings about involves sin.

Some have tried to avoid this implication by pointing out that during the first five plagues the text does not say explicitly that God hardened Pharaoh's heart but that it "was hardened" (Exodus 7:22; 8:19; 9:7) or that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Exodus 8:15,32), and that only in the sixth plague does it say explicitly "the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart" (9:12; 10:20,27; 11:10; 14:4). For example R.T. Forster and V.P. Marston say that only from the sixth plague on God gave Pharaoh "supernatural strength to continue with his evil path of rebellion"

But this observation does not succeed in avoiding the evidence of two wills in God. Even if Forster and Marston were right that God was not willing for Pharaoh's heart to be hardened during the first five plagues, they concede that for the last five plagues God does will this, at least in the sense of strengthening Pharaoh to continue in the path of rebellion. Thus there is a sense in which God does will that Pharaoh go on refusing to let the people go, and there is a sense in which he does will that Pharaoh release the people. For he commands, "Let my people go." This illustrates why theologians talk about the "will of command" ("Let my people go!") and the "will of decree" ("God hardened Pharaoh's heart").

The Exodus is not a unique instance of God's acting in this way. When the people of Israel reached the land of Sihon king of Heshbon, Moses sent messengers "with words of peace saying, Let me pass through your land; I will travel only on the highway" (Deuteronomy 2:26-27). Even though this request should have lead Sihon to treat the people of God with respect, as God willed for his people to be blessed rather than attacked, nevertheless "Sihon the king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him; for *the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate*, that he might give him into your hand, as at this day" (Deuteronomy 2:30). In other words it was God's will (in one sense) that Sihon act in a way that was contrary to God's will (in another sense) that Israel be blessed and not cursed.

Similarly the conquest of the cities of Canaan is owing to God's willing that the kings of the land resist Joshua rather than make peace with him. "Joshua waged war a long time with all these kings. There was not a city which made peace with the sons of Israel except the Hivites living in Gibeon; they took them all in battle. *For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, to meet Israel in battle in order that he might utterly destroy them*, that they might receive no mercy, but that he might destroy them, just as the Lord had commanded Moses" (Joshua 11:19-20). In view of this it is difficult to imagine what Fritz Guy means when he says that the "will of God" is always to be thought of in terms of loving desire and intention rather than in terms of God's effective purpose of judgment. What seems more plain is that when the time has come for judgment God wills that the guilty do things that are against his revealed will, like cursing Israel rather than blessing her.

The hardening work of God was not limited to non-Israelites. In fact it plays a central role in the life of Israel in this period of history. In Romans 11:7-9 Paul speaks of Israel's failure to obtain the righteousness and salvation it desired: "Israel failed to obtain what it sought. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that should not see and ears that should not hear, down to this very day." Even though it is the command of God that his people see and hear and respond in faith (Isaiah 42:18), nevertheless God also has his reasons for sending a spirit of stupor at times so that some will not obey his command.

Jesus expressed this same truth when he explained that one of the purposes of speaking in parables to the Jews of his day was to bring about this judicial blinding or stupor. In Mark 4:11-12 he said to his disciples, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables; *so that they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand*; lest they should turn again, and be forgiven." Here again God wills that a condition prevail which he regards as blameworthy. His will is that they turn and be forgiven (Mark 1:15), but he acts in a way to restrict the fulfillment of that will.

Paul pictures this divine hardening as part of an overarching plan that will involve salvation for Jew and Gentile. In Romans 11:25-26 he says to his Gentile readers, "Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: *a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in*, and so all Israel will be saved." The fact that the hardening has an appointed end—"until the full number of the Gentiles comes in"—shows that it is part of God's plan rather than a merely contingent event outside God's purpose. Nevertheless Paul expresses not only his but also God's heart when he says in Romans 10:1, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for them [Israel] is their salvation." God holds out his hands to a rebellious people (Romans 10:21), but ordains a hardening that consigns them for a time to disobedience.

This is the point of Romans 11:31-32. Paul speaks to his Gentile readers again about the disobedience of Israel in rejecting their Messiah: "So they [Israel] have now been disobedient *in order that* by the mercy shown to you [Gentiles] they also may receive mercy." When Paul says that Israel was disobedient "in order that" Gentiles might get the benefits of the gospel, whose purpose does he have in mind? It can only be God's. For Israel did not conceive of their own disobedience as a way of blessing the Gentiles or winning mercy for themselves in such a round about fashion. The point of Romans 11:31 therefore is that God's hardening of Israel is not an end in itself, but is part of a saving purpose that will embrace all the nations. But in the short run we have to say that he wills a condition (hardness of heart) which he commands people to strive against ("Do not harden your heart" (Hebrews 3:8, 15; 4:7).

God's Right to Restrain Evil and His Will Not To

Another line of Biblical evidence that God sometimes wills to bring about what he disapproves is his choosing to use or not to use his right to restrain evil in the human heart.

Proverbs 21:1 says, "The king's heart is like channels of water in the hands of the Lord; he turns it wherever he wishes." An illustration of this divine right over the king's heart is given in Genesis 20. Abraham is sojourning in Gerar and says to king Abimelech that Sarah is his sister. So Abimelech takes her as part of his harem. But God is displeased and warns him in a dream that she is married to Abraham. Abimelech protests to God that he had taken her in his integrity. And God says (in verse 6), "Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and *I also kept you from sinning against me; therefore I did not let you touch her.*"

What is apparent here is that God has the right and the power to restrain the sins of secular rulers. When he does, it is his will to do it. And when he does not, it is his will not to. Which is to say that sometimes God wills that their sins be restrained and sometimes he wills that they increase more than if he restrained them.

It is not an unjust infringement on human agency that the Creator has the right and power to restrain the evil actions of his creatures. Psalm 33:10-11 says, "The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nought; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the LORD stands for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations." Sometimes God frustrates the will of rulers by making their plans fail. Sometimes he does so by influencing their hearts the way he did Abimelech, without them even knowing it.

But there are times when God does not use this right because he intends for human evil to run its course. For example, God meant to put the sons of Eli to death. Therefore he willed that they not listen to their father's counsel: "Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting. And he said to them, `Why do you do such things, the evil things that I hear from all these people? No, my sons; for the report is not good which I hear the Lord's people circulating. If one man sins against another, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?' But they would not listen to the voice of their father, *for the Lord desired to put them to death*" (1 Samuel 2:22-25).

Why would the sons of Eli not give heed to their father's good counsel? The answer of the text is "*because the Lord desired to put them to death.*" This only makes sense if the Lord had the right and the power to restrain their disobedience—a right and power which he willed not to use. Thus we must say that in one sense God willed that the sons of Eli go on doing what he commanded them not to do: dishonoring their father and committing sexual immorality.

Moreover the word for "desired" in the clause, "the Lord *desired* to put them to death," is the same Hebrew word (*haphetz*) used in Ezekiel 18:23,32 and 33:11 where God asserts that he does not *desire* the death of the wicked. God desired to put the sons of Eli to death, but he does not desire the death of the wicked. This is a strong warning to us not to take one assertion, like Ezekiel 18:23 and assume we know the precise meaning without letting other scripture like 1

Samuel 2:25 have a say. The upshot of putting the two together is that in one sense God may desire the death of the wicked and in another sense he may not. Another illustration of God's choosing not to use his right to restrain evil is found in Romans 1:24-28. Three times Paul says that God hands people over (*paredoken*) to sink further into corruption. Verse 24: "God handed them over to the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves." Verse 26: "God handed them over to dishonorable passions." Verse 28: "And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God handed them over to a base mind and to improper conduct." God has the right and the power to restrain this evil the way he did for Abimelech. But he did not will to do that. Rather his will in this case was to punish, and part of God's punishment on evil is sometimes willing that evil increase. But this means that God chooses for behavior to come about which he commands not to happen. The fact that God's willing is punitive does not change that. And the fact that it is *justifiably* punitive is one of the points of this chapter. There are other examples we could give, but we pass on to a different line of evidence.

Does God Delight in the Punishment of the Wicked?

We just saw that God "desired" to put the sons of Eli to death, and that the word for desire is the same one used in Ezekiel 18:23 when God says he does not "delight" in the death of the wicked. Another illustration of this complex desiring is found in Deuteronomy 28:63. Moses is warning of coming judgment on unrepentant Israel. What he says is strikingly different (not contradictory, I will argue) from Ezekiel 18:23. "And as the Lord took delight in doing you good and multiplying you, so *the Lord will take delight in bringing ruin upon you and destroying you.*"

Here an even stronger word for joy is used (*yasis*) when it says that God will "take delight over you to cause you to perish and to destroy you." We are faced with the inescapable biblical fact that in some sense God does not delight in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 18), and in some sense he does (Deuteronomy 28:63; 2 Samuel 2:25).

How Extensive Is the Sovereign Will of God?

Behind this complex relationship of two wills in God is the foundational biblical premise that God is indeed sovereign in a way that makes him ruler of all actions. R.T. Forster and V.P. Marston try to overcome the tension between God's will of decree and God's will of command by asserting that there is no such thing as God's sovereign will of decree: "Nothing in Scripture suggests that there is some kind of will or plan of God which is inviolable." This is a remarkable claim. Without claiming to be exhaustive it will be fair to touch on some scriptures briefly that do indeed "suggest that there is some kind of will or plan of God which is inviolable." There are passages that ascribe to God the final control over all calamities and disasters wrought by nature or by man. Amos 3:6, "Does evil befall a city, unless the LORD has done it? Isaiah 45:7, "I am the LORD, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness, I make peace and create woe, I am the LORD, who do all these things." Lamentations 3:37-38, "Who has commanded and it came to pass, unless the Lord has ordained it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and evil come?" Noteworthy in these texts is that the calamities in view

involve human hostilities and cruelties that God would disapprove of even as he wills that they be.

The apostle Peter wrote concerning God's involvement in the sufferings of his people at the hands of their antagonists. In his first letter he spoke of the "will of God" in two senses. It was something to be pursued and lived up to on the one hand. "Such is *the will of God*, that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Peter 2:15). "Live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men but for *the will of God*" (4:2). On the other hand the will of God was not his moral instruction, but the state of affairs that he sovereignly brought about. "For it is better to suffer for doing right, *if that should be God's will*, than for doing wrong" (3:17). "Let those who suffer *according to God's will* do right and entrust their souls to a faithful Creator" (4:19). And in this context, the suffering which Peter has in mind is the suffering which comes from hostile people and therefore cannot come without sin.

In fact the New Testament saints seemed to live in the calm light of an overarching sovereignty of God concerning all the details of their lives and ministry. Paul expressed himself like this with regard to his travel plans. On taking leave of the saints in Ephesus he said, "I will return to you *if God wills*," (Acts 18:21). To the Corinthians he wrote, "I will come to you soon, *if the Lord wills*" (1 Corinthians 4:19). And again, "I do not want to see you now just in passing; I hope to spend some time with you, *if the Lord permits*" (1 Corinthians 16:7).

The writer to the Hebrews says that his intention is to leave the elementary things behind and press on to maturity. But then he pauses and adds, "And this we will do *if God permits*" (6:3). This is remarkable since it is hard to imagine one even thinking that God might not permit such a thing unless one had a remarkably high view of the sovereign prerogatives of God.

James warns against the pride of presumption in speaking of the simplest plans in life without a due submission to the overarching sovereignty of God in whether the day's agenda might be interrupted by God's decision to take the life he gave. Instead of saying, "Tomorrow we will do such and such . . . you ought to say, *'If the Lord wills, we shall live and we shall do this or that'*" (James 4:15). Thus the saints in Caesarea, when they could not dissuade Paul from taking the risk to go to Jerusalem "ceased and said, *'The will of the Lord be done'*" (Acts 21:14). God would decide whether Paul would be killed or not, just as James said.

This sense of living in the hands of God, right down to the details of life was not new for the early Christians. They knew it already from the whole history of Israel, but especially from their wisdom literature. "The plans of the mind belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord" (Proverbs 16:1). "A man's mind plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps" (Proverbs 16:9). "Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will be established" (Proverbs 19:21). "The lot is cast into the lap, but the decision is wholly from the LORD" (Proverbs 16:33). "I know, O LORD, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). Jesus had no quarrel with this sense of living in the hand of God. If anything, he intensified the idea with words like Matthew 10:29, "Are not two

sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father."

This confidence that the details of life were in the control of God every day was rooted in numerous prophetic expressions of God's unstoppable, unthwartable sovereign purpose. "Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, *'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose'*" (Isaiah 46:9-10; cf. 43:13). "all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing; and *he does according to his will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, 'What doest thou?'*" (Daniel 4:35). "I know that thou canst do all things, and that *no purpose of yours can be thwarted'*" (Job 42:2). "Our God is in the heavens; he does whatever he pleases" (Psalm 115:3).

One of the most precious implications of this confidence in God's inviolable sovereign will is that it provides the foundation of the "new covenant" hope for the holiness without which we will not see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14). In the old covenant the law was written on stone and brought death when it met with the resistance of unrenewed hearts. But the new covenant promise is that God will not let his purposes for a holy people shipwreck on the weakness of human will. Instead he promises to do what needs to be done to make us what we ought to be. "And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live" (Deuteronomy 10:16). "I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances" (Ezekiel 36:27). "I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them; and I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me" (Jeremiah 32:40). "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, *for it is God who is at work in you to will and to work for his good pleasure'*" (Philippians 2:12-13).

In view of all these texts I am unable to grasp what Forster and Marston might mean by saying, "Nothing in Scripture suggests that there is some kind of will or plan of God which is inviolable" (see note 26). Nor can I understand how Fritz Guy can say that the "will of God" is always a desiring and intending but not a sovereign, effective willing (see note 12). Rather the Scriptures lead us again and again to affirm that God's will is sometimes spoken of as an expression of his moral standards for human behavior and sometimes as an expression of his sovereign control even over acts which are contrary to that standard.

This means that the distinction between terms like "will of decree" and "will of command" or "sovereign will" and "moral will" is not an artificial distinction demanded by Calvinistic theology. The terms are an effort to describe the whole of biblical revelation. They are an effort to say Yes to all of the Bible and not silence any of it. They are a way to say Yes to the universal, saving will of 1 Timothy 2:4 and Yes to the individual unconditional election of Romans 9:6-23.

Does It Make Sense?

I turn now to the task of reflecting on how these two wills of God fit together and make sense—as far this finite and fallible creature can rise to that challenge.

The first thing to affirm in view of all these texts is that God does not sin. "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." (Isaiah 6:3). "God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself does not tempt anyone" (James 1:13). In ordering all things, including sinful acts, God is not sinning. For as Jonathan Edwards says, "It implies no contradiction to suppose that an act may be an evil act, and yet that it is a good thing that such an act should come to pass. . . . As for instance, it might be an evil thing to crucify Christ, but yet it was a good thing that the crucifying of Christ came to pass." In other words the Scriptures lead us to the insight that God can will that a sinful act come to pass without willing it as an act of sin in himself.

Edwards points out that Arminians, it seems, must come to a similar conclusion. All must own that God sometimes wills not to hinder the breach of his own commands, because he does not in fact hinder it But you will say, God wills to permit sin, as he wills the creature should be left to his freedom; and if he should hinder it, he would offer violence to the nature of his own creature. I answer, this comes nevertheless to the very same thing that I say. You say, God does not will sin absolutely; but rather than alter the law of nature and the nature of free agents, he wills it. He wills what is contrary to excellency in some particulars, for the sake of a more general excellency and order. So that the scheme of the Arminians does not help the matter.

This seems right to me, and it can be illustrated again by reflecting directly on 1 Timothy 2:4 where Paul says that God wills all persons to be saved. What are we to say of the fact that God wills something that in fact does not happen. There are two possibilities as far as I can see. One is that there is a power in the universe greater than God's which is frustrating him by overruling what he wills. Neither Calvinist nor Arminian affirms this.

The other possibility is that God wills not to save all, even though he is willing to save all, because there is something else that he wills more, which would be lost if he exerted his sovereign power to save all. This is the solution that I as a Calvinist affirm along with Arminians. In other words both Calvinists and Arminians affirm two wills in God when they ponder deeply over 1 Timothy 2:4. Both can say that God wills for all to be saved. But then when queried why all are not saved both Calvinist and Arminian answer that God is committed to something even more valuable than saving all.

The difference between Calvinists and Arminians lies not in whether there are two wills in God, but in what they say this higher commitment is. What does God will more than saving all? The answer given by Arminians is that human self-determination and the possible resulting love relationship with God are more valuable than saving all people by sovereign, efficacious grace. The answer given by Calvinists is that the greater value is the manifestation of the full range of God's glory in wrath and mercy (Romans 9:22-23) and the humbling of man so that he enjoys giving all credit to God for his salvation (1 Corinthians 1:29).

This is utterly crucial to see, for what it implies is that 1 Timothy 2:4 does not settle the momentous issue of God's higher commitment which restrains him from saving all. There is no mention here of free will. Nor is there mention of sovereign, prevenient, efficacious grace. If all we had was this text we could only

guess what restrains God from saving all. When free will is found in this verse it is a philosophical, metaphysical assumption not an exegetical conclusion. The assumption is that if God wills in one sense for all to be saved, then he cannot in another sense will that only some be saved. That assumption is not in the text, nor is it demanded by logic, nor is it taught in the rest of Scripture. Therefore 1 Timothy 2:4 does not settle the issue; it creates it. Both Arminians and Calvinists must look elsewhere to answer whether the gift of human self-determination or the glory of divine sovereignty is the reality that restrains God's will to save all people.

The Calvinists which I admire do not claim to have simple, easy solutions to complex Biblical tensions. When their writing is difficult this is because the Scriptures are difficult (as the apostle Peter admitted that, in part, they are, 2 Peter 3:16). These Calvinists are struggling to be faithful to diverse (but not contradictory) scriptures. Both Calvinists and Arminians feel at times that the ridicule directed against their complex expositions are in fact a ridicule against the complexity of the scriptures.

I find the effort of Stephen Charnock (1628-1680), a chaplain to Henry Cromwell and non-conformist pastor in London, to be balanced and helpful in holding the diverse scriptures on God's will together.

God doth not will [sin] directly, and by an efficacious will. He doth not directly will it, because he hath prohibited it by his law, which is a discovery of his will; so that if he should directly will sin, and directly prohibit it, he would will good and evil in the same manner, and there would be contradictions in God's will: to will sin absolutely, is to work it (Psalm 115:3): "God hath done whatsoever he pleased." God cannot absolutely will it, because he cannot work it. God wills good by a positive decree, because he hath decreed to effect it. He wills evil by a private decree, because he hath decreed not to give that grace which would certainly prevent it. God doth not will sin simply, for that were to approve it, but he wills it, in order to that good his wisdom will bring forth from it. He wills not sin for itself, but for the event.

Similarly Jonathan Edwards, writing about 80 years later comes to similar conclusions with somewhat different terminology.

When a distinction is made between God's revealed will and his secret will, or his will of command and decree, "will" is certainly in that distinction taken in two senses. His will of decree, is not his will in the same sense as his will of command is. Therefore, it is no difficulty at all to suppose, that the one may be otherwise than the other: his will in both senses is his inclination. But when we say he wills virtue, or loves virtue, or the happiness of his creature; thereby is intended, that virtue, or the creature's happiness, absolutely and simply considered, is agreeable to the inclination of his nature.

His will of decree is, his inclination to a thing, not as to that thing absolutely and simply, but with respect to the universality of things, that have been, are or shall be. So God, though he hates a thing as it is simply, may incline to it with reference to the universality of things. Though he hates sin in itself, yet he may will to permit it, for the greater promotion of holiness in this universality, including all things, and at all times. So, though he has no inclination to a creature's

misery, considered absolutely, yet he may will it, for the greater promotion of happiness in this universality.

Putting it in my own words, Edwards said that the infinite complexity of the divine mind is such that God has the capacity to look at the world through two lenses. He can look through a narrow lens or through a wide-angle lens. When God looks at a painful or wicked event through his narrow lens, he sees the tragedy or the sin for what it is in itself and he is angered and grieved. "I do not delight in the death of anyone, says the Lord God" (Ezekiel 18:32). But when God looks at a painful or wicked event through his wide-angle lens, he sees the tragedy or the sin in relation to everything leading up to it and everything flowing out from it. He sees it in all the connections and effects that form a pattern or mosaic stretching into eternity. This mosaic, with all its (good and evil) parts he does delight in (Psalm 115:3).

God's emotional life is infinitely complex beyond our ability to fully comprehend. For example, who can comprehend that the Lord hears in one moment of time the prayers of ten million Christians around the world, and sympathizes with each one personally and individually like a caring Father (as Hebrews 4:15 says he will), even though among those ten million prayers some are broken-hearted and some are bursting with joy? How can God weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice when they are both coming to him at the same time—in fact are always coming to him with no break at all?

Or who can comprehend that God is angry at the sin of the world every day (Psalm 7:11), and yet every day, every moment, he is rejoicing with tremendous joy because somewhere in the world a sinner is repenting (Luke 15:7,10,23)? Who can comprehend that God continually burns with hot anger at the rebellion of the wicked, grieves over the unholy speech of his people (Ephesians 4:29-30), yet takes pleasure in them daily (Psalm 149:4), and ceaselessly makes merry over penitent prodigals who come home?

Who of us could say what complex of emotions is not possible for God? All we have to go on here is what he has chosen to tell us in the Bible. And what he has told us is that there is a sense in which he does not experience pleasure in the judgment of the wicked, and there is a sense in which he does.

Therefore we should not stumble over the fact that God does and does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked. When Moses warns Israel that the Lord will take delight in bringing ruin upon them and destroying them if they do not repent (Deuteronomy 28:63), he means that those who have rebelled against the Lord and moved beyond repentance will not be able to gloat that they have made the Almighty miserable. God is not defeated in the triumphs of his righteous judgment. Quite the contrary. Moses says that when they are judged they will unwittingly provide an occasion for God to rejoice in the demonstration of his justice and his power and the infinite worth of his glory (Romans 9:22-23).

When God took counsel with himself as to whether he should save all people, he consulted not only the truth of what he sees when looking through the narrow lens but also the larger truth of what he sees when all things are viewed through the wide-angle lens of his all-knowing wisdom. If, as Calvinists say, God deems it wise and good to elect unconditionally some to salvation and not others, one may

legitimately ask whether the offer of salvation to all is genuine. Is it made with heart? Does it come from real compassion? Is the willing that none perish a bona fide willing of love?

The way I would give an account of this is explained by Robert L. Dabney in an essay written over a hundred years ago. His treatment is very detailed and answers many objections that go beyond the limits of this chapter. I will simply give the essence of his solution which seems to me to be on the right track, though he, as well as I, would admit we do not "furnish an exhaustive explanation of this mystery of the divine will."

Dabney uses an analogy from the life of George Washington taken from Chief-Justice Marshall's *Life of Washington*. A certain Major André had jeopardized the safety of the young nation through "rash and unfortunate" treasonous acts. Marshall says of the death warrant, signed by Washington, "Perhaps on no occasion of his life did the commander-in-chief obey with more reluctance the stern mandates of duty and of policy." Dabney observes that Washington's compassion for André was "real and profound". He also had "plenary power to kill or to save alive." Why then did he sign the death warrant? Dabney explains, "Washington's volition to sign the death-warrant of André did not arise from the fact that his compassion was slight or feigned, but from the fact that it was rationally counterpoised by a complex of superior judgments . . . of wisdom, duty, patriotism, and moral indignation [the wide-angle lens]."

Dabney imagines a defender of André, hearing Washington say, "I do this with the deepest reluctance and pity." Then the defender says, "Since you are supreme in this matter, and have full bodily ability to throw down that pen, we shall know by your signing this warrant that your pity is hypocritical." Dabney responds to this by saying, "The petulance of this charge would have been equal to its folly. The pity was real, but was restrained by superior elements of motive. Washington had official and bodily power to discharge the criminal, but he had not the sanctions of his own wisdom and justice." The corresponding point in the case of divine election is that "the absence of volition in God to save does not necessarily imply the absence of compassion." God has "a true compassion, which is yet restrained, in the case of the . . . non-elect, by consistent and holy reasons, from taking the form of a volition to regenerate." God's infinite wisdom regulates his whole will and guides and harmonizes (not suppresses) all its active principles."

In other words, God has a real and deep compassion for perishing sinners. Jeremiah points to this reality in God's heart. In Lamentations 3:32-33 he speaks of the judgment that God has brought upon Jerusalem: "Though he causes grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not *willingly* afflict or grieve the sons of men." The word "willingly" translates a composite Hebrew word (*milibo*) which means literally "from his heart" (cf. 1 Kings 12:33). It appears that this is Jeremiah's way of saying that God does will the affliction that he caused, but he does not will it in the same way he wills compassion. The affliction did not come "from his heart." Jeremiah was trying, as we are, to come to terms with the way a sovereign God wills two different things, affliction and compassion.

God's expression of pity and his entreaties have heart in them. There is a genuine inclination in God's heart to spare those who have committed treason against his kingdom. But his motivation is complex, and not every true element in it rises to the level of effective choice. In his great and mysterious heart there are kinds of longings and desires that are real— they tell us something true about his character. Yet not all of these longings govern God's actions. He is governed by the depth of his wisdom expressed through a plan that no ordinary human deliberation would ever conceive (Romans 11:33-36; 1 Corinthians 2:9). There are holy and just reasons for why the affections of God's heart have the nature and intensity and proportion that they do.

Dabney is aware that several kinds of objections can be raised against the analogy of George Washington as it is applied to God. He admits that "no analogy can be perfect between the actions of a finite and the infinite intelligence and will." Yet I think he is right to say that the objections do not overthrow the essential truth that there can be, in a noble and great heart (even a divine heart), sincere compassion for a criminal that is nevertheless not set free.

Therefore I affirm with John 3:16 and 1 Timothy 2:4 that God loves the world with a deep compassion that desires the salvation of all men. Yet I also affirm that God has chosen from before the foundation of the world whom he will save from sin. Since not all people are saved we must choose whether we believe (with the Arminians) that God's will to save all people is restrained by his commitment to human self-determination or whether we believe (with the Calvinists) that God's will to save all people is restrained by his commitment to the glorification of his sovereign grace (Ephesians 1:6,12,14; Romans 9:22-23).

This decision should not be made on the basis of metaphysical assumptions about what we think human accountability requires. It should be made on the basis of what the scriptures teach. I do not find in the Bible that human beings have the ultimate power of self-determination. As far as I can tell it is a philosophical inference based on metaphysical presuppositions. On the other hand this book aims to show that the sovereignty of God's grace in salvation is taught in Scripture.

My contribution has simply been to show that God's will for all people to be saved is not at odds with the sovereignty of God's grace in election. That is, my answer to the above question about what restrains God's will to save all people is his supreme commitment to uphold and display the full range of his glory through the sovereign demonstration of his wrath and mercy for the enjoyment of his elect and believing people from every tribe and tongue and nation.

From *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*. Thomas Schreiner/Bruce Ware, editors (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000). Desiring God highly recommends this excellent work. This article is now an appendix in *The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God's Delight in Being God* by John Piper (Sisters: Multnomah, 2 ed., 2000).

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