



Scriptures and Doctrine :: Is there anything God doesn't know?

Is there anything God doesn't know? - posted by savannah, on: 2018/4/3 7:13

OMNISCIENCE -

God knows all things, whether they be possible, past, present, or future; whether they be things that he can do, but will never do, or whether they be things that he hath done, but are not now; things that are now in being, or things that are not now existing, that lie in the womb of their proper and immediate causes. If his understanding be infinite, he then knows all things whatsoever that can be known, else his understanding would have bounds, and what hath limits is not infinite, but finite. If he be ignorant of any one thing that is knowable, that is a bound to him, it comes with an exception, a but, God knows all things but this; a bar is then set to his knowledge. If there were anything, any particular circumstance in the whole creation or non-creation, and possible to be known by him, and yet were unknown to him, he could not be said to be omniscient; as he would not be Almighty if any one thing, that implied not a repugnancy to his nature, did transcend his power. - Stephen Charnock

Is there anything God doesn't know?

Re: Is there anything God doesn't know? - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2018/4/3 9:07

God doesn't know a person he doesn't love. :-)

Re: :-(- posted by savannah, on: 2018/4/3 9:38

"God doesn't know a person he doesn't love"

...except for Esau
:-)

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/3 9:57

God knows all there is to know.

The word "œis" is a rather vital word in that sentence.

Re: Is there anything God doesn't know? - posted by dspks, on: 2018/4/3 10:25

Can you name something that God doesn't know?
(If so, will you tell God or keep it from Him?)

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/3 10:49

I would say, in general terms, that God does not know how to perform logical impossibilities.

Re: "is" - posted by savannah, on: 2018/4/3 11:12

Todd,

You said, "God knows all there is to know. The word 'is' is a rather vital word in that sentence."

What exactly are you saying?

I don't want to put words in your mouth, so I'll just ask you if you'd plainly answer the following question.

Does God know all that is to come, i.e the future? Or, might there be something there may be in the future that He does not know will occur or not occur?

Thanks in advance. Although I don't know what your answer will be, or even if you will answer at all, God knows. B-)

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2018/4/3 11:26

Assuming we agree that God knows everything (past, present and future), does that mean He orchestrates, or dare I say, predestines everything? Is knowing everything different from causing everything?

For example does God cause the weather to behave as it does in each and every place on this planet every day minute by minute?

Is it God's will that we had wind and rain all week-end? May seem a trite question, but it has a serious point.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/3 11:37

//Does God know all that is to come, i.e the future? Or, might there be something there may be in the future that He does not know will occur or not occur?//

I suppose that depends on whether a person believes the future exists 'now'.

In keeping with Dave's line of questioning, if the future exists 'now' and God knows it, there is no free will, regardless how a person tries to explain it away.

The future may exist now, and if so God knows it, but in that case we are simply chess pieces being moved in a game- the outcome of which God knew eons and eons ago- and not only did he know the outcome but also the minutiae of every move.

That may be true, but if so God must be pretty bored. When I was a kid I used to love to play with my electric football game. That's a game from the 70s where you arrange little plastic players on a metal field, and when you turned it on the field vibrated and the players moved across the field. But even that got boring after a while, even though there was some degree of randomness to the players movements.

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2018/4/3 11:59

//In keeping with Dave's line of questioning, if the future exists 'now' and God knows it, there is no free will, regardless how a person tries to explain it away.//

Todd, I don't agree with that conclusion. When we try and explain the eternity of God and say things like 'the future exists now' we are straying into the 'secret things of the LORD' that we cannot possibly know or comprehend. From the perspective of man and creation the future does not exist, but God is eternal, the Alpha and Omega, there is no past or future in God, just GOD IS.

I believe God knows everything, including the future, but that does not mean He wills or causes everything that happens. Does that make God impotent? No, because he allows all those things, but is still able to use them to bring about His sovereign will. God is sovereign and in control BECAUSE He knows what will happen and has a plan, not because He controls every move.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/3 12:46

I don't have a problem with defining sovereignty that way.

But if God knows now that I will eat a turkey sandwich for lunch tomorrow, guess what I'm havin for lunch tomorrow?

Re: Is there anything God doesn't know? - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/4/3 13:01

Sooo if you know the outcome beforehand and act in opposition to it, then repent from said actions and act in direct contrast to your original "plan/purpose" how is that omniscience or even sovereignty as being defined here?

Wouldn't that plainly be an impossibility?

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/3 14:09

If "You are going to eat pizza tomorrow" is an absolutely true sentence, then you cannot refrain from eating pizza tomorrow. The "movie" must run its course.

If "You are going to eat pizza tomorrow" is an absolutely false sentence, then you cannot eat pizza tomorrow. The "movie" must run its course.

And so with all other human actions. If the future is settled, we have no option but to play out the settled "movie reel".

What we must decide is this: Is it possible that the sentence, "You are going to eat pizza tomorrow" is NEITHER true nor false? Some would argue it does not become true or false until you have made your choice. For you have free will.

In my opinion, human efforts to make human free will compatible with absolute foreknowledge are doomed to failure.

Personally, I don't have a problem at all with the idea that the future does not exist now. I realize that freaks people out but doesn't bother me a tad.

I guess absolute foreknowledge does not bother me either, but I must give up the idea of being free and must accept that I am being moved like a chess piece. But the implications of that are devastating to the glory of God so I try not to think about it.

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/4/3 14:37

Brother Todd,
I can definitely relate to that-

Several scriptures come to mind but an easy one is Genesis 6 where

5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

I mean that seems to fly in the face of the definitions of sovereignty and omniscience previously given in this thread, no?

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2018/4/3 15:19

Brother Fletcher, Jesus was the lamb slain from before the foundation of the earth, so man's sin did not come as surprise to God.

Some things must be recognised. God is the one with omniscience, not us. So God's knowledge of the future does not effect us and our every day living choices.

I still maintain that God knowing all the future does not take away our free choice, He just knows what it will be! You only have to read the many OT prophecies regarding Israel's fate to see that God knows what they will do in the future and what He will do in response. He also puts the responsibility fully on them and encourages a better choice, even then.

though He knows they won't. I don't see any problem with this. May be I'm too simple! :)

Todd, taking your chess analogy, it would be better to consider us as the other player, rather than inanimate chess pieces, which we are not. If the player opposite possesses all knowledge about what moves we are going to make, then he will plan his moves perfectly to win, but he is not forcing or compelling us to make those moves, we are choosing, but he knows. Seems quite simple to me.

Re: foreknowledge of God - posted by TrueWitness, on: 2018/4/3 15:30

Some in here are acting like we no longer have a free will if God knows ahead of time what we will do. I know it may seem that way but I think we are letting the time dilation factor sway our thinking on this. In no way do I think that God's foreknowledge CAUSES or FORCES our hand. To put it succinctly, God's knowing what we will choose to do in no way changes the fact that we CHOSE to do it. There is no invisible hand forcing us like chess pieces around a chess board. I really don't want to argue about this. If you insist that everything is not only deterministic but fatalistically decided by God, I will pray for you. That paradigm to me is very disturbing and besmirches the character of God.

Edit: If you say that since God knows ahead of time what you will do, you CAN'T do otherwise, I would say you WON'T do otherwise. The difference between can't and won't is critical to understand this issue.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/3 15:32

Dave-

I wanted to clarify something: is it your position that God knows what we will do because he is really really smart (for lack of a better term) or because he foresaw us doing it (ie he looked into the future)?

There is a subtle but important distinction.

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/4/3 15:47

Brother Dave,

I get what you're saying,... I suppose it to be a lil different, more of potential vs literal...

For example;

If I take my lil boys boating, I put a life preserver (Christ crucified) on them before they even enter the boat, as I'm well aware of the "potential" they may not obey me and fall out of the boat. But if I knew beforehand that my boys would not only disobey me but also fall out and be mortally wounded, would it not be an act of total irresponsibility or worse on my part to ever put them in the boat at all?

Many may say that God's ways are higher than ours and that's true, however not (in my understanding) to the extreme that many will take it to explain things. God, according to scripture, loves us and wants to be known by us.

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2018/4/3 15:56

Todd, God saw before hand, not just smart.

I agree with True Witness's post.

Fletcher, I think all human examples and analogies will fall short of explaining God's nature.

Scripture clearly teaches God's omniscient foreknowledge and also our free will to choose life or death and God's infinite righteousness. I just accept it is so and have no issue with that and do not try to work it all out based on my perceptions.

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/4/3 16:46

Brother Dave,

Yes agreed any analogy or parable will come up short in a through dissection, yet the scriptures are replete with them being even utilized by the Lord Himself on numerous occasions. Having said that, I don't by any means have this topic worked out to my satisfaction as it's been on the burner for quite a while, sometimes boiling over :/

One central question I have posed to myself that so far have been unable to fully answer is , "where does the sovereignty of God end and the free will of man begin?"

Perhaps you may have some thoughts that could be beneficial in my studies, if so it would be a blessing:)

Re: Now I know! - posted by docs (), on: 2018/4/3 17:59

9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.

10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

11 But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!"

12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for NOW I KNOW that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." (Genesis 22:9-12)

God instructed Abraham to slay his son upon a altar and after the Angel of the Lord (Jesus?) called to Abraham from heaven He said you have not withheld your son from Me (God). Whether it's Jesus or God the Father it is obviously divinity yet this divinity says, "NOW I KNOW." Why didn't He know before if He knows all things? Did God purposefully limit His foreknowledge here so as to not know Himself which way Abraham would go until the actual event, obedience or disobedience, took place? Just asking.

Re: Is there anything God doesn't know? - posted by dspks, on: 2018/4/3 18:15

"Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake. Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God? But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased." Psalms 115:1-3,

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/3 18:23

Docs asked: "Why didn't He know before if He knows all things?"

Great question- in reading the passage it seems like a true test. I mean you can feel the tension. Some would say that the test was for Abraham's benefit and God knew 10 trillion years before what he would do. I don't know- maybe.

To those who think God's perfect foreknowledge does not influence free will, I would posit that is like saying God can make square circles or make 1=2.

Re: Is there anything God doesn't know? - posted by dspks, on: 2018/4/3 18:30

Our logic ALWAYS seems logical!

But, the problem with our logic is that it is OUR logic.

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/3 19:28

I see what Dave is saying and it's a reasonable conclusion. Allow me to post an alternative.

I offer a different conclusion. Why? Because the conclusion (which I also held) is untenable.

If its true "now I know" means that God was learning what Abraham was going to do. "now I know" means God doesn't have absolute foreknowledge of the future...then

This very thing could be said of every person, they are teaching God what they will do. God is learning from each of us about us, what we truly are. Because God didn't know Abraham was going to be obedient, there is nothing then stopping the extension of this thought into all people at all times.

This is the very heart of open theism. It redefines God as the learning, bullet dodging god that increases the power of man's will over and above his sovereign power of God.

It is impossible to read and understand the prophets and come away thinking God is waiting for Pharaohs' next move or King Nebuchadnezzar to make a decision.

God does know all things exhaustively, and his foreknowledge of all things interworks with his love for us, his condescension to us whereby we being mere dust are here today and gone tomorrow but yet...overcomers.

"now I know" is the same thing as saying "now it is proven" you fear me. Abraham didn't know until he obeyed. God knew, but Abraham's knowledge of his obedience and God's knowledge of his obedience were to be in harmony.

God knows my future sins and my future obedience, I on the other hand do not know and because God knows my sin does not mean his foreknowledge has deterministically blocked me from obedience. Nor does his knowledge of my obedience block me into obedience where I overcome no actual temptation, nor could I actually sin where I am alone responsible.

Fatalism is unbiblical, its pagan.

At the risk of sounding pedantic, the answer to God's sovereignty and man's free will is found in this

"God works in us to will and do his good pleasure"

I don't need to understand an abstract theory of divine power/will making contact with human will/desire. I experience it every day as a Christian on a level that removes the abstraction and places God's will and my will in plain view of myself and others.

Now, I know there are plenty of theologians and apologists that would poopoo that little statement as immature low-level thinking.

But since I have some experience with these things, I know something too. I know they do not abstract their way into submission to Christ, it is a surrender of their will. I know if they will live in faith and love one another they do so because Christ is living out his own life in them, and their carnal minds and hearts have been crucified so that there be no hindrance.

Here is where the victory must be won, it will never be won by redefining God's knowledge base, or expanding man's libertarian willing.

At judgment day, when we all receive what we have done in our bodies, God will not reward us according to his abstract foreknowledge of future events. God will reward us accordingly as our faith was proven in our own lives. Our rewards are based upon the life we lived in the body, God has not complicated our obedience with knowledge of abstract tenants, nor will he condemn some of us by reason of his own foreknowledge that came to pass exactly as God foresaw, but because we actually did righteousness or actually sinned.

lastly, holding to open theism on this front, may seem to answer a troubling question of divine concurrence, but it simultaneously rips apart whole forests of theology you thought you did know.

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/3 20:39

"now I know" = "now it is proven"

Someone will say "you're adding to the word of God" let it mean what it means. Ok fine.

Please take up your cross and follow Jesus, make sure to pick out a rough cut 4x6 make sure you get at least fair dimensions and begin carrying that with you where ever you go... otherwise to say "carry your cross" and do something else is 'adding to the word of God'.

We have no qualms about leaving the 4x6's at home depot in regards to our faith, nor do we cut off our hand when it has done sin, or pluck out our eyes, nor do we drink Jesus blood, nor do we eat his flesh.

Even when God said "it repenteth me that I made them"

He did judge the world by flood, but from those 8 sprang the Christ, and from his victory the 'new man' that we have become in Christ Jesus.

He didn't change his mind about making man, nor did he think "wow, making man sure has its consequences".

All of that kind of slippery theology only undoes those great and precious promises that came because "we have all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in him", because we were chosen before the foundation of the world...and Christ being slain from the foundation of the world 'was proven' and shown that God's love for us was not an abstraction as foreknowledge leads us, but love demonstrated in time space, in a body in this world.

God didn't repent that he made man, he instead made more and more men and in due time made a man born of a virgin who would be called Emmanuel God with us.

Even in the great deluge, where all flesh died but 8, did God spare the little child who did no actual right or wrong, and did no actual evil, though capable of all kinds of evil yet is innocent of any evil? Did God repent of making them? Yet would they not incur some grace and mercy?

Would God send them to a fiery hell because "he just learned this mankind creature gives him a migraine?"

Or is God going to learn that maybe he was rash?

The implications of God's "learning" about men is like a virus in the blood, before long all is infected, all is sick and there is no soundness.

For one pretended answer at the expense of God's essence, the dominoes begin to fall...and they all fall. The Open theism God is a god that is no better than the pagans, did God dodge a bullet when Moses wife and child fled Egypt when the final plagues arrived? Did he learn that a woman with baby is protective? What did he learn when mother ate their children during the famine in Jeremiah's day?

Oh boy, that Satan, what a lesson he must have taught God?

But he was expelled as a teacher...or was he?

"Have you considered my servant Job?"

When Satan slapped all those boils on Job, did God say? "Wow, thanks Devil I didn't know what Job was going to do?"

I wonder what it's like to be a teacher with awesome power and say "Obey me and live, disobey and die" Yet, because he didn't know if we would be obedient, or disobey, he just issues the edict and lets the chips fall where they might.

"Oh, I see, you sinned, I didn't know until now you were going to sin, What? You said you prayed that you would be delivered; Yes, but I didn't know for sure you were really going to sin until you did it. Sorry about that."

All of these insane and ludicrous anecdotes can be mustered ad nauseum; but they all point to one thing. God's learning is our demise. A God that has power but doesn't have knowledge...well, maybe the atheist challenge is a good one after all?

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/3 20:57

I donâ€™t have a problem with your statement that â€œnow I knowâ€ means â€œnow it is proven.â€

The only problem is that the word â€œprovenâ€ would seem rather strange if God knew the outcome.

That would be like me popping a coffee pod into the keurig and when itâ€™s done brewing I take a sip and say â€œthat proves itâ€™s coffee.â€

Once again, I am not saying that God did not know what Abraham would do. What I AM saying is that if God knew, it was not a true test despite how Abraham felt about it. I suspect if Abraham found out later that God knew all along what he would do, he would have been rather miffed at having to go through the ordeal in the first place. It likely traumatized both him and Isaac.

Edit: if those who hold to this type of meticulous sovereignty would simply say that man does not have free will, the dilemma would disappear. But instead they have to do gyrations to try to show how both are compatible because they realize that idea of man not being free is distasteful.

Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2018/4/3 21:02

I wonder if God knew this thread was going to appear on SI today? If so, I wonder if he's laughing or crying, or just shaking his head and saying, those silly humans, always trying to figure me out, and what it is about Isaiah 55:9 they don't understand, they will never figure me out. :-)

Re: - posted by Christinyou (), on: 2018/4/3 22:19

I have heard and read of many who speak of Moses changing God' mind and kept God from destroying Israel. Does anybody really believe that?

The answer to the original question is; NO. There is plenty I don't know, especially how Jesus would have to die in my place, Him being God. God knows, there is nothing God does not know.

In Christ: Phillip

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2018/4/3 22:53

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Isaiah 46:9,10

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/3 23:06

Hi Todd: I appreciate the interaction, and if I might use your analogy.

By faith Abraham looked at the unlabeled K cup and said, all the world has these K cups and they are all poison, every pagan drinks these things but I serve the living God; yet, I'll put it in, it may be that it's not coffee but I believe in what God has said and I believe even if it is poison to me, God is able to raise me up and I will drink again.

Abraham didn't know, we didn't know, the world didn't know but, Abraham's faith in God was not demonstrated until he took the sip, Then God who knew it was coffee and had no intention of killing Abraham said "now I know you fear me, because you drank against the dictates of the world around you.

The lesson from the mount has never been about what God didn't know about Abraham, but what Abraham didn't know about God. False and silly theologies reverse what is important and in doing so create questions about God that only lead to unbelief.

Again, thanks for allowing this silly analogy expanded to demonstrate (in my clumsy way) the text never directs us to look at what God might not know, but at what God knows he can do with a man who has faith in him. Which one generates faith? Is it a learning God? Or is it a man with faith in a God that seems to ask the impossible of us?

When I see it, I see a loving God who was waiting to link a man of faith with God's untold abundant blessing. I see God's intention was to demonstrate faith in him has its reward. The open theist has Abraham schooling God...and misses the e

ntire point of the text.

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/3 23:13

By the way

Savannah quoting Stephen Charnock's definitive work

The existence and attribute of God, is a wonderful work and I highly recommend it.

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2018/4/4 4:43

Marvin, you have expressed a lot of truth on this subject here. Thank you.

This point you make is important, quote: "The lesson from the mount has never been about what God didn't know about Abraham, but what Abraham didn't know about God. False and silly theologies reverse what is important and in doing so create questions about God that only lead to unbelief."

It seems to me that the misunderstanding of God's foreknowledge comes from putting the emphasis the wrong way round, whether that is considering God's foreknowledge as if it is ours or God's testing us as if He is testing Himself.

Todd, I never thought you were a literalist in the sense of taking a word or phrase in English in a dogmatic way. God saying "Now I know" (as Marvin has pointed out) does not equate to God not knowing, but now it has become reality in Abraham's life and deepened the relationship between Abraham and God.

When Jesus says of the wicked "I never knew you", does He really mean He never knew who they were or anything about them? That does not make sense. Surely He means He never had a relationship with them. Similar to how "Abraham knew Sarah and she bore a son". It did not mean Abraham learned something about Sarah, it means he had an intimate relationship with her.

If God does not know everything, He is not God.

Just because we cannot perfectly explain it or fully understand it does not mean it is not true.

Can you fully explain the Trinity, or God being both transcendent and imminent, His omnipresence, etc...?

We can state these are truths from scripture, but we cannot fully understand them.

I would recommend Tozer's book 'The Knowledge of the Holy' as a good read on this subject.

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/4/4 5:12

Brother Dave,

You wrote "If God does not know everything, He is not God."

Could you please show me that in scripture?

And again if the above is true, would you please explain Genesis 6:5-7 in light of your above statement?

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2018/4/4 5:54

Brother Fletcher,

God's eternity (from eternity to eternity) permeates all through scripture. I would be here for ages if I went through every reference and we don't need proof texts for this. But if you want a text he is just one....

"Your eyes have seen my unformed substance;

And in Your book were all written

The days that were ordained for me,

When as yet there was not one of them." Psalm 139:16

God being eternal does not just mean He will always exist, it means He is the 'I AM', no beginning or end. Jesus said "Before Abraham, I AM. He did not say 'I was'.

Can you explain that? No nor can I.

Genesis 6 has already been answered by another on an earlier post I think. But you cannot take out a statement like this to say God was taken by surprise, when there are so many other statements that show God had perfect foreknowledge of the sin problem and planned redemption through His son from eternity. Even in Genesis 3:15 we see the provision was foretold of the coming Christ as savior.

BTW Fletcher, I am generally encouraged by your posts on SI. I guess we just see this topic very differently.

Re: show us a sign! - posted by savannah, on: 2018/4/4 6:51

"Could you please show me that in scripture?"

If you've not seen it, Dave nor any other will be able to show you. It's like not being able to hear what one is saying because they're speaking so loud.

"God acquires no new knowledge of the thoughts and hearts by the discovery of them in the actions."

"He would then be but equal in this part of knowledge to his creature; no man or angel but may thus arrive to the knowledge of them; God were then excluded from an absolute dominion over the prime work of his lower creation; he would have made a creature superior in this respect to himself, upon whose will to discover, his knowledge of their inward intentions should depend; and therefore when God is said to search the heart, we must not understand it as if God were ignorant before, and was fain to make an exact scrutiny and inquiry, before he attained what he desired to know; but God condescends to our capacity in the expression of his own knowledge, signifying that his knowledge is as complete as any man's knowledge can be of the designs of others, after he hath sifted them by a strict and thorough examination, and wrought out a discovery of their intentions, that he knows them as perfectly as if he had put them upon the rack, and ordered them to make a discovery of their secret plottings. Nor must we understand that in Gen. 22:12, where God saith, after Abraham had stretched out his hand to sacrifice his son, 'Now I know that thou fearest God,' as though God was ignorant of Abraham's gracious disposition to him; did Abraham's drawing his knife furnish God with a new knowledge? no, God knew Abraham's pious inclinations before (Gen. 18:19): 'I know him, that he will command his children after him,' &c.

"Knowledge is sometimes taken for approbation; then the sense will be, Now I approve this fact as a testimony of thy fear of me, since thy affection to thy Isaac is extinguished by the more powerful flame of affection to my will and command; I now accept thee, and count thee a meet subject of my choicest benefits: or, Now I know, that is, I have made known and manifested the faith of Abraham to himself and to the world: thus Paul uses the word know (1 Cor. 2:2): 'I have determined to know nothing;' that is, to declare and teach nothing, to make known nothing but Christ crucified: or else, Now I know, that is, I have an evidence and experiment in this noble fact, that thou fearest me. God often condescends to our capacity in speaking of himself after the manner of men, as if he had (as men do) known the inward affections of others by their outward actions."

"If God doth not know future things, there was a time when God was ignorant of most things in the world; for before the deluge he was more ignorant than after; the more things were done in the world, the more knowledge did accrue to God, and so the more perfection; then the understanding of God was not perfect from eternity, but in time; nay, is not perfect yet, if he be ignorant of those things which are still to come to pass; he must tarry for a perfection he wants, till those futures come to be in act, till those things which are to come, cease to be future, and begin to be present. Either God knows them, or desires to know them; if he desires to know them and doth not, there is something wanting to him; all desire speaks an absence of the object desired, and a sentiment of want in the person desiring: if he doth not desire to know them, nay, if he doth not actually know them, it destroys all providence, all his government of affairs; for his providence hath a concatenation of means with a prospect of something that is future: as in Joseph's case, who was put into the pit, and sold to the Egyptians in order to his future advancement, and the preservation both of his father and his envious brethren. If God did not know all the future inclinations and actions of men, something might have been done by the will of Potiphar, or by the free-will of Pharaoh, whereby Joseph might have been cut short of his advancement, and so God have been interrupted in the track and method of his designed providences."

"Everything which is the object of God's knowledge without himself was once only future. There was a moment when nothing was in being but himself: he knew nothing actually past, because nothing was past; nothing actually present, because nothing had any existence but himself; therefore only what was future. And why not everything that is future now

, as well as only what was future and to come to pass just at the beginning of the creation? God indeed knows everything as present, but the things themselves known by him were not present, but future; the whole creation was once future, or else it was from eternity; if it begun in time, it was once future in itself, else it could never have begun to be. Did not God know what would be created by him, before it was created by him? Did he create he knew not what, and knew not before, what he should create? Was he ignorant before he acted, and in his acting, what his operation would tend to? or did he not know the nature of things, and the ends of them, till he had produced them and saw them in being? Creatures, then, did not arise from his knowledge, but his knowledge from them; he did not then will that his creatures should be, for he had then willed what he knew not, and knew not what he willed; they, therefore, must be known before they were made, and not known because they were made; he knew them to make them, and he did not make them to know them; By the same reason that he knew what creatures should be before they were, he knows still what creatures shall be before they are; for all things that are, were in God, not really in their own nature, but in him as a cause; so the earth and heavens were in him, as a model is in the mind of a workman, which is in his mind and soul, before it be brought forth into outward act." Stephen Charnock

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/4/4 7:25

Brother Dave,

Thank you for responding, and I too enjoy and am blessed by your contributions here on SI.

If in fact we do ultimately see this subject differently then that is no problem on my end as it doesn't affect our fellowship:)

I do hope you understand that I'm not challenging your view for the sake of contention, rather I am hoping to glean from your understanding and thereby growing in my own understanding....

This has been a topic I was confronted by early on in my walk with the Lord. Initially, as most do, I held to a classical position regarding the sovereignty, omniscience, omnipotence etc.. of God- however as I began discipleship training and really began to dig into the word I was and still am confronted by scriptures that (for me) contradicts that view. This happened organically in that it wasn't necessarily a topic I was studying, as it was settled by presupposition, yet scriptures were leaping off the page to challenge this view I was clinging too,... as if the Lord Himself was opening His word so as to loosen my grip on a belief that was untested and (for me) ultimately insufficient to accurately account for the whole counsel of the word. Since that time, it's been my intent to not only seek the Lord regarding the truth of His Spirit but also to learn from what He has given to other parts of His body that we may indeed be one.

So again, I sincerely appreciate your patience with me to this end and hope you were not offended by my lightly prodding you for more of your insights:)

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/4 7:26

So do you all believe the future exists (ie is settled), NOW?

It seems you must, but I wanted to check.

Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2018/4/4 8:38

I heard God had a question for all of us this morning, it was, is there anything we don't know? :-)

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/4 8:41

Yeah Bill- I don't know how to open a cereal box without tearing it so it won't close right again.

Re: Todd - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2018/4/4 8:44

I know! don't you wish those folks that design these easy opening things, would have to have to spend the rest of their lives opening them? They would all end up in the mental hospital.

Re: - posted by savannah, on: 2018/4/4 9:21

"So do you all believe the future exists (ie is settled), NOW?"

"God indeed knows everything as present, but the things themselves known by him were not present, but future; the whole creation was once future, or else it was from eternity; if it begun in time, it was once future in itself, else it could never have begun to be. Did not God know what would be created by him, before it was created by him? Did he create he knew not what, and knew not before, what he should create? Was he ignorant before he acted, and in his acting, what his operation would tend to? or did he not know the nature of things, and the ends of them, till he had produced them and saw them in being? Creatures, then, did not arise from his knowledge, but his knowledge from them; he did not then will that at his creatures should be, for he had then willed what he knew not, and knew not what he willed; they, therefore, must be known before they were made, and not known because they were made; he knew them to make them, and he did not make them to know them; By the same reason that he knew what creatures should be before they were, he knows still what creatures shall be before they are; for all things that are, were in God, not really in their own nature, but in him as a cause; so the earth and heavens were in him, as a model is in the mind of a workman, which is in his mind and soul, before it be brought forth into outward act." Stephen Charnock

Re: ignoramuses - posted by savannah, on: 2018/4/4 9:26

Hey Mr Bill,

You said,

"...is there anything we don't know? :-)

My guess is that you've been reading the final chapters in the book of Job. God certainly does interrogate Job there. And Job answers as we all should. He puts his hand over his mouth!

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/4 10:07

Charnock's response to my question is non-sensical, at least to me.

He is saying in much simpler terms that God created what He foresaw as His creation before He created it. When He foresaw exactly what His creation would be (but before He actually created it) He went ahead and created exactly what he foresaw Himself creating.

Of course He also foresaw Himself foreseeing exactly what His creation would be (before He actually created it).

What's more, He foresaw himself foreseeing himself foreseeing exactly what His creation would be before He actually created it.

I can keep going if you want me to....

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/4 16:05

Simple analogy; as an engineer envisions his new invention, he takes into account the materials and the nature of those materials into consideration when building. When it is completed, it is as he envisioned. So now what was only a vision is now substance. The engineer not only knows the totality of his invention but all the particulars that must be known to obtain the desired result.

God makes his own universe, made his own matter to make his own materials to make his own world to make his own man and then says..."Gen 1:31 God saw all that He had made, and it was very good. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day."

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/4 16:18

Mr Bill: you said.

I wonder if he's laughing or crying, or just shaking his head and saying, those silly humans, always trying to figure me out, and what it is about Isaiah 55:9 they don't understand, they will never figure me out. :-)

It maybe God is doing neither. He might be pleased that his sons are discussing him, seeking to learn from each other which is part of what it means to live in the body of Christ. He could be pleased that we offer each other sometimes conflicting and slanted views of God that we are not familiar with...and they are taken in a good spirit, thought through and then replied to. It may be he is directing us, because he knew and ordained this website to be a place of learning, expression and conversation. He might very well be leading us to clear the cobwebs of fuzzing thinking about himself and teaching us all to direct our hearts and faith toward him.

God does not view us with cynicism, where conversations are had that may truly be very well beyond our grasp, but may be he delights in those who seek him and desire to know him as he is.

I know his thoughts are above my thoughts, but I also know... 1 Corinthians 2:16 For who has known the Lord's mind, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

With that mind I want him to instruct me.

Re:...and he told two friends...and he told two friends... - posted by savannah, on: 2018/4/4 16:46

"I can keep going if you want me to...."

No thanks, I never did like merry-go-rounds!

But...at least there's an end to their amusement!

I'll just go on this note; sing along if you believe it!

Because He lives
I can face tomorrow
Because He lives
All fear is gone

Because I know..ow..ow
He KNOWS the future
And life is worth the living
Just because He lives

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/4 17:02

well, actually it's "He holds the future" but your point is well-taken.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2018/4/5 13:05

My wife and I have had this same discussion several times over the years. She contends that God knows absolutely everything. I contend that He knows all but what He has determined not to know. Let me give you the details.

Scripture says that God knows the end from the beginning. Psalms 139 (I think) tells us that all of our days are written in His book. This is how I see it. God created time and, by analogy, we are like rats in a maze. Don't take the analogy further than I intend it. As a rat in the maze, I am inside of time. I only see the passage I am in and when I get there, the choice of right or left that I can take. The maze comes to me sequentially, like time itself.

Yet God, the creator of time, sees the maze and the correct path, the beginning, the end, and each wrong turn that can be made, all at one glance. In His book of my created purpose and destiny, He sees the preordained path that I am to take (His perfect will for me, or the sequence of right turns that I need to take). This is what is written in His book.

But I am free to choose not to walk in His destiny for my life. I am free to reject Him. This is where my wife and I disagree. I don't believe God has chosen to know what I will choose since that has been given to my own free will. Yet He knows His fore-ordained path for me. She believes that He does know all of the wrong turns I will take and whether I will ultimately be in His plan for me. I disagree and believe He has chosen not to know this since He made me free to choose for or myself.

It fits with God repenting Himself that He made man. It fits with God's continual dealing with me. If He knew that I would never choose Him, why would he waste the time in my opinion. It also fits with the fact that there are things He has clearly chosen not to remember (my past sins).

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/4/5 13:19

Brother Travis,

This is similar to where I am at on the subject... the way I (currently) understand it is- God is 100% sovereign and omniscient over His plan but for things outside His plan, not so much. Obviously His plan also contains a "contingency" aspect which is His way of getting us back on His plan:)

One of the primary objectives of His plan is to convince us of His goodness so that we will voluntarily yield our free will to His sovereignty,... which of happens by faith :)

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/5 13:38

Travis and Fletcher: This is always the rub.

Freewill demands its own life before and after being born again. In order for our human will to remain in a posture of serving what I want when I want and who I want, it's necessary to reverse engineer the sovereignty of God where God must make all this room for human will...when in fact the human will before regeneration is a slave and in fact dead in sin. Afterwards it is now supposed to yield its freedom to the Indwelling Lord and Christ.

The scripture proof for 'selective memory loss' and 'selective knowing' is non-existent.

He does forget our sins, but not insofar as they cease to exist, otherwise how would you differentiate between forgiven and unforgiven? They are removed and cast away never to be held against us, never to have any weight to condemn us.

You make too much of your own human will, in that, God must now 'hide his face from your inward thoughts' in order for you to feel free. If you are free, it had nothing to do with some necessity placed upon God by reason of 'human will must remain inviolate'.

It was grace and love, you both know this, it was not the intrinsic make up of your humanity that God gives freedom.

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/4/5 14:06

Brother Marvin,

Have about a half a dozen paths to respond rolling around in my mind,... will pray and seek the Lord on this and as soon as He opens one, giving me a green light, I hope to respond back to your post:)

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/5 14:09

Travis, that is similar to the solution by CS Lewis as well (never mind some folks in these here parts think heâ€™s a heretic).

If I remember correctly he felt our life was like a timeline written on a sheet of paper but that God, being outside time is looking down on the whole sheet of paper at once and therefore sees our whole timeline at once. Thus he does not fore see us doing things, he simply sees us doing them when we actually do them. He sees today me doing something tomorrow, but he is not looking at tomorrow from my today, because He is outside and not part of today. Thus He is not foreseeing but simply seeing.

When I first read that it helped me; it still does. Maybe its the truth.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2018/4/5 15:39

Quote:
----- Freewill demands its own life before and after being born again. In order for our human will to remain in a posture of serving what I want when I want and who I want, it's necessary to reverse engineer the sovereignty of God where God must make all this room for human will...when in fact the human will before regeneration is a slave and in fact dead in sin. Afterwards it is now supposed to yield its freedom to the Indwelling Lord and Christ.

I am not sure our will is enslaved before salvation. Paul said in Romans 7 that it was present with him to will, but how to accomplish the service to God that he willed to do escaped him because of his unregenerate spirit. In other words, he was trying by an act of his will to serve God in the flesh and found himself falling short. It took spiritual rebirth to give him the power to accomplish what he desired to do through the flesh.

In order to be born again, we must first die to our own flesh and the works of our own will (either good or bad). If any man come after me he must first deny himself and then take up his cross and follow me. If I do not deny myself, I cannot be saved. It is an act of my own will to deny myself. God, I am done with self effort and with self determination. Hebrews 6 and 9 tell us that we must repent of and cease from dead works. These are the efforts of our own fleshly will in our vain attempts to follow God like Paul attempted to do before he was born again.

So I do yield my own will to His. I yield everything to Him. This yielding continues for a lifetime of serving Him. And because I live in the flesh, I can still choose to disobey Him and to walk away from Him. This is why, in my opinion, Paul says in Romans 11 that we are saved if we continue in His goodness (the same that brought us to repentance), and why he told the Colossians that they had peace with God if they continued and were not moved away from the hope of the gospel.

I am not sure that I make too much of my will. I desire my will to be surrendered to Him. I want to think His thoughts, feel as He feels, and do His will at all times. God does not have to hide from my most inward thoughts. He knows them, and he still chose to forgive me. That is His kindness in that while I was yet a sinner, He died for me. This love and this relationship causes me, when I fail, to run to Him with all my might and say, "God, what is it in me that is still not yielded? Thank you for Your forgiveness that is so wonderfully offered to me. Now let's fix me so that I can be more like You."

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2018/4/5 15:42

I love Lewis. Can't agree with everything he says, but there are some revelations of God and relationship with Him that Lewis had that blow me away sometimes. I would say that I agree with what you posted about his view more than I disagree with it.

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/5 16:07

Travis said:

In order to be born again, we must first die to our own flesh and the works of our own will (either good or bad). If any man come after me he must first deny himself and then take up his cross and follow me. If I do not deny myself, I cannot be saved. It is an act of my own will to deny myself. God, I am done with self effort and with self determination. Hebrews 6 and 9 tell us that we must repent of and cease from dead works. These are the efforts of our own fleshly will in our vain attempts to follow God like Paul attempted to do before he was born again.

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I say...Travis, you may not always win my head, but you always win my heart brother, Praise the Lord.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2018/4/5 17:48

Quote:

----- I say...Travis, you may not always win my head, but you always win my heart brother, Praise the Lord.

HaHa!

Praise God!

Bless you Bro. Marvin.

Re: secret faults - posted by savannah, on: 2018/4/5 21:53

Travis,

You say,

"I don't believe God has chosen to know what I will choose since that has been given to my own free will."

You're free to believe that! Albeit, it is at an infinite distance from the truth.

I offer this small morsel from Charnock as an appetizer;

"â€œCleanse me,â€ saith David, â€œfrom my secret faultsâ€ (Psalm 19:12),

secret in regard of others, secret in regard of himself; how could God cleanse him from that whereof he was ignorant? H

he knows sins before they are committed, much more when they are in act; he foreknew the idolatry and apostasy of the Jews; what gods they would serve, in what measure they would provoke him. and violate his covenant (Deut. 31:20, 21); he knew Judas's sin long before Judas's actual existence, foretelling it in the Psalms; and Christ predicts it before he acted it." Charnock

Numerous proofs from God Himself, in His Word, are strewn throughout the Scriptures as a testimony to us of His knowledge of sins to be committed in the future by His creatures.

It's an irrefutable truth!

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/5 22:22

Very good, Savannah, I hadn't considered that text. Gotta love that Charnock.

It seems that when God knows the decisions of men, certain men infer he will interfere or influence or bring pressure from other means, this inference seems to create a conflict where their free decisions are not free thereby implying God is coercive to men. Even if my strain of thought is not accurate, what is common is the element of quid pro quo, "I get the sense of freedom I require while God receives no bad press from 'free humans'."

The sense I have always gotten from this line of thinking is what looks to be a "protection clause"; meaning If I am not interfered with in my decisions, I can protect God from the accusations of coercion and determinism.

Notwithstanding the excellent texts cited, if what is being created is a protection clause agreement, you would not need a single text in favor of omniscience, the unbiblical agreement falls on its own.

This is one of the rubs of diving deeper into theological issues, sometimes (I refer only to myself) what is at stake is not a doctrinal position but an emotional/psychological one. I know this for certain, it's been my humbling experience when biblical truth has exposed something about me where I was interfering with a clear presentation of scripture. But, I may be the only one.

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/4/5 22:37

Brother Savannah,
Edit to insert text;

Hosea 7:1 "When I would have healed Israel, THEN the iniquity of Ephraim WAS DISCOVERED, and the wickedness of Samaria: for they commit falsehood; and the thief cometh in, and the troop of robbers spoileth without."
Deuteronomy 1:33 "Who went in the way before you, to SEARCH you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to shew you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day."
Numbers 10:33 "And they departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey: and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey, to SEARCH out a resting place for them."
Jeremiah 17:10 "O Lord SEARCH the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."
Romans 8:27 "He that searcheth the hearts"
1 Corinthians 2:10 "The Spirit searcheth all things"
Revelation 2:23 "I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts"

Psalms 139:23-24 "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

"If God already knew there'd be no need to search, no?"

Also...

3 And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle.
4 Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom

neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents;
5 They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I command ed not, nor spake it, NEITHER CAME IT INTO MY MIND:
(Emphasis added for clarity)

Hmmmm...

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/6 11:32

Hi Fletcher: Savannah already addressed those texts in an earlier post. He quoted Charnock as offering a biblical answer.

"Neither came into my mind" simply means "I would not have imagined such a thing for my people to do"...this runs in context with the thought...I didnt command, I didnt speak it,

This is the same thing as saying " I am going to punish my son for painting black paint all over his walls in this bedroom: ..." I never told him he could do that, I never said for him to do this, I would have never imagined such a thing for him to do"..

This has absolutely nothing to do with God not knowing something.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/6 12:39

I agree with Charnock on that point- miracles do happen!

Re: Line in the sand - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/6 13:55

I utterly loath, maybe hate to the deepest part of my soul any idea that God's word is revealing God to be on par with humans.

God does not search us out to 'learn something about us" God searches us out, because...

1. He loves his creation
2. He involves himself in knowing the inward motives, decisions, feelings and ideas we have, this is not to learn from us but to show to us a God who is not a distant Deist God that has an abstract foreknowledge of our actions and thoughts, but as a wise creator intimate with his own creation
3. To show on Judgment day, God's judgments are not from a distant power, but a heavenly creator who first hand at the moment of your sin or your victory understood with you why you did what you did. The judgment of God is not according to foreknowledge but according to his inward searching/his evaluation, judging and discerning mind/Spirit. He will literally say "I was there when you did or said".

Instead, of learning the Fear of the Lord who searches

Jeremiah 17:10 "For the Lord SEARCH the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

We seem to miss the intent of God's searching, is it because he doesn't know us? What blasphemy against God, I loath it.

It is because in telling us he inwardly searches us, we will have no excuses at the bar of God, our reasoning will be understood word for word...and God does this to show our rewards or our reproach is fully evidenced. We should learn to fear the Lord from these texts, instead as evidenced in failed interpretations, these falsehoods lead us to advance human power over God, they lead us away from the fear of the Lord toward a god that is limited, learning, incomplete, imperfect, and incapable. When we say God has a hole in him by way of 'lack' of anything just how deep is that hole? It is past finding out.

I don't know a God who learns about Marvin. I don't know a God who searches me to figure out what I am going to do, that is a pagan god, one of the old Greek mythological gods with limited power and knowledge. They are just reactionaries to man chess moves. My God is not playing chess with my life, nor with any life, he is working all things according to his own purposes and in the end all things will show him for exactly what he is.

Wherever a preacher would teach this, I would be the first to tell him he is in error, I would never send anyone to listen to him and never let him preach from any pulpit I had responsibility for. The God that needs to learn, dodge cosmic bullets is no God that I read in the bible, that god is one of human manufacture.

Is it too harsh? Not at all, but for this heresy loving generation...anything that interferes with their sacred human will is an anathema to them.

Why make a big deal out of it? It was a small thing in Joseph Smith's day to have your own following...now a massive Latter Day Saints Cult has arisen. All wrong, all doctrinal error, but friendly and nice and pleasant and easy to entreat...but full of deadly spiritual poison. I loath them.

I loath and refuse to the deepest core of my being anyone or any teaching that lowers the God of scripture to a creature level and then uses bible verses to validate their blasphemy.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/6 14:08

//I utterly loath, maybe hate to the deepest part of my soul any idea that God's word is revealing God to be on par with humans. //

Has anyone here even hinted at such a thing?

Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2018/4/6 14:32

Hold on! this is getting good, and I knew it would eventually, let me grab my popcorn. :-)

Re: @Todd - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/4/6 14:34

I know right!??

Sorry for slow response brother Marvin, am otherwise occupied today-

I respect that you read the text differently than I may and have no qualms, simply pursuing what I love,... Truth:)

Again (for me) the idea that God could create with not only foreknowledge but also absolute control, a being to do a thing and then after doing what said being was created to do, be inflamed with wrath and punish said being for completing said creative purpose, is well crazytown talk:/

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/6 15:28

//crazytown talk//

The understatement of this comment cannot be fathomed.

It is probable that I am misunderstanding you Marvin. I am not not sure if you believe God meticulously controls or pre-ordains what each person will do. In other words does God decide who to save and who not to save based on his sovereign choice alone?

How that question is answered will determine how "crazy-town" it is.

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2018/4/6 15:58

I find myself falling in between you guys (Todd and Fletcher on one side and Marvin and Savannah on the other)!

I believe that God knows everything, past present and future, but I don't see that equates to God pre-ordaining or predestinating all things. Now for me as a human it would be impossible to know anything for certain about the future unless I pre-ordained it. But God is not a human, therefore He can and does Know everything without ordaining it. I agree with Marvin, that it is wrong to bring God down to our level to say what He can and cannot do.

And so I will now leave it to Marvin and Savannah to answer from their perspective, which undoubtedly will become a debate around the Calvin / reformed doctrine of predestination. As I said, I think you can hold to a high view of God and His omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, etc without believing He predestines every single event and in particular who will and can be saved.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/6 19:16

Hello Dave-

Yes this is a tough one. The only solution that makes sense to me is the one posited by CS Lewis I set forth in an earlier post.

I hope it doesn't turn into a discussion about predestination/double predestination because if so I may have to say something that is not very nice.

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/6 20:37

Hi Bill: I wouldn't get to excited, no blows are going to be thrown, or maybe you just like popcorn?

Todd, I believe God has absolute foreknowledge therefore he knows who will be saved and who will not. This translates into he knows who he will save and who he will not. This translates into he saves his elect and the non-elect are not saved. The bible is explicit that God has an elect people, those who believe to the saving of their soul are the elect. The bible is explicit that God knows the future and who he will save and who he will judge. The bible is explicit that God predestines all the way from his foreknowledge to glorification. The bible is explicit that God has power to make one vessel to honor another to dishonor.

All of this can be found in easy reading of Pauls Epistles.

The only way to miss it, would be from errant teaching or our own personal distastes for God's power and will to make what he wants how he wants.

In all my postings I've yet to have anyone actually show an interpretational error. I have seen plenty who have expressed personal tastes about what they believe God might do in order to avoid conflicting with the human will. But in all of that, no sufficient biblical truth has been submitted.

In short, I don't even need to make a case for myself because I have no actual refutations and secondly when I offered alternative interpretations, they were acceptable, thereby vindicating me of any conflict in my assertions; but my dissenters entertained both my interpretations and their own...so they own the tension that creates.

Hi Fletcher:

I don't really understand this? You said..

Again (for me) the idea that God could create with not only foreknowledge but also absolute control, a being to do a thing and then after doing what said being was created to do, be inflamed with wrath and punish said being for completing said creative purpose, is well crazytown talk:/

This statement reads to me..."God made men to talk, therefore God punishes them for talking" Or "God made men to marry, work, have families, and because they did all of these, God will punish them".

If that is what you meant, I need not respond it is an un-biblical characterization of God that vindicates me entirely.

If that is not what you meant, please clarify.

I believe people are punished for their sins they have committed themselves, what they are and what they do is contrary to truth and light.

If you are non-reformed but believe God knows who will be saved and who will not be saved...this foreknowledge is like ice, its frozen, not to be changed.

So, whether I am reformed, arminian, somewhere in between, the fact is, God gave life to sinner who he knows he will cast into hell, the fact that multitudes of them have died without hearing the gospel, or ever knowing of the true God is a problem only for those who think they must develop a theology to improve upon God's own justice and wisdom.

I have no necessity to develop any theology that does that.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/6 21:19

Thanks Marvin for answering. Now if you would clarify for me one step further:

In your view did God create certain persons (actually the vast vast majority of persons) with the intention of consigning them to eternal torment (assuming arguing that is the final fate)?

Re: - posted by Martyr (), on: 2018/4/6 22:43

If I throw a rock off a cliff I know what's going to happen. It doesn't mean I ordained it, it means there is a law, a reality in which everything within it is made subject to. We as humans have done an amazing job at figuring out the physical laws, and based on these we can make accurate predictions.

However the scriptures teach there is another law governing this world AS WELL as the physical. This is where scientists and particularly psychologists err, they only have one side of the coin.

Through the scriptures we can discern the spiritual laws that govern the land. As a scientist can predict what will happen to a rock dropped off a cliff so now we can discern what keeping company with sinners will do to a man, as an example. We can look at a particular relationship or person and, based on the spiritual laws, make an educated guess as to what will occur. (Saw one recently where a believer married an unbeliever. To the physical eye they were a perfect match but to those with an understanding of the spiritual side of things ruin was predicted and indeed did occur.)

Knowledge does not imply predestination. God made a world outside of His Kingdom (which is eternal) and everything in it is made subject to its nature (even God Himself had to take on the form of flesh in this place.) Does God know everything? Absolutely, but to each person he has given that as a person a gift, the gift of choice. Does God know what's going to happen regardless of what is chosen? It would seem to reason he does as He knows the order of all things as we know a rock will fall if dropped, but there is still a choice for man to make.

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/4/7 0:48

Brother Marvin,

Agreed as that not being as well worded as it could have been, though you are a quite thoughtful and intelligent man (from your postings here on SI) and I trusted you would discern the point in spite of the clumsiness of my words, however you have my sincerest apologies as it was not my intent to muddle the discussion.

Now that I have a bit more time, please allow me to attempt again at articulating my understanding. Though it may not be much better as I can only utilize what I have to work with and at the end of the day I'm a barber in Alabama with a GE D, but God is good and He gave me faith so I shall utilize it here in hopes of a reconciliation of sorts.)

If the God of the Bible as He characterizes Himself in His word is to be understood to create mankind without a free will to either choose nor not to choose to yield themselves to Christ, all while being absolutely sovereign over all events and having absolute foreknowledge contained within an absolute omniscience,... then in effect God created at least one man without the option or ability to repent in response to Christ and then punishes that man for not repenting and turning to Christ all while creating another man whom also has no choice but by the will of God does repent in response to Christ and

d is thereby subsequently rewarded,... where is there any glory in that for Christ? That seems completely foreign to my understanding of God as He reveals Himself both in the Bible and in personal revelation.

The God that sought and pursued me, that in His mercy allowed me to come to the end of myself over and over by allowing me to experience the consequences of my own choices, (my own will), failing and injuring not only myself but all those whom I loved, for decades! All while being confident that I could "get it right" if I worked harder and tried harder, committing more and more sins in the process until ultimately, just when I thought I had it all worked out, everything came crashing down.... again!

Tho this time I didn't choose to pull myself up by my bootstraps as I no longer believed it was worth it to try... I was utterly and completely defeated with nothing to offer anyone. It was there that I, in my total humiliation, chose to turn to Him and I told Him I was sorry... I was sooo sorry for He had never been anything but good to me and everything He gave me I made a mess of. I told Him I was sorry I had nothing to offer Him of any worth, no return on His investment, as I'd lost it all. I told Him the only thing I had left to offer Him was myself and I'd made such a mess of me that the shame was unbearable and He said to me, "that's all I ever wanted".

That day was September 20 2010 at approximately 5:20ish in the afternoon,... it was a Monday... cloudy with spots of rain off and on all day.

That was the day He took the mess I made and exchanged it for a treasure unimaginable. That was the day He translated me out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of His beloved Son. He baptized me with His Holy Spirit (I didn't even know there was such a thing but that's what He called it) and in an instant I was reborn. He then required of me that I would go both privately and publicly (where applicable) and personally repent and ask forgiveness for all the pain and trouble I'd caused. Now I surely did not want to do this, just the thought repulsed me... but I knew that was the only way to continue with Him and nothing was gonna keep me from that. I figured I'd made a fool of myself for years for vanity and at least now it'd be for His glory. So I chose to obey Him not knowing what the outcome of people's responses would be,... it was humiliating but each time it got a lil easier until ultimately it was finished, His name had been cleared of all charges associated with me and I had peace. That was more than 10 years after I was baptized in a foreign prison where He used a dear prison chaplain to minister His mercy and grace to me. Tho I responded at the time and chose to be baptized, it was for me and not Him. I used Him to get what I wanted and immediately discarded Him and chose to continue on with the same life I had been living. Bent on proving I was worthy of His favor.

So you see, the God that saves me gave me a choice.... to either choose His way or mine and to this day still I must choose His way over my own everyday and on the days and sometimes months when I don't, He in His mercy allows me to come to the end of myself that I may again repent and return to Him. The God that did all that and continues to, loves me and wants me to reciprocate His love, not by force nor by obligation or by His controlling ordination of sovereignty,... but by choice. That's how He gets glory! He receives it when we choose to trust Him and obey Him in spite of ourselves and even loved ones, no matter the circumstance or consequence. And it's not for ourselves but for His beloved Son, our savior, Jesus the Christ.

So (for me) if God already knew all this would happen, meaning the choices I've made, and in fact "preprogrammed" me to do so,... there'd be no glory for Christ in that as it's tantamount to being forced to do a thing that He made me to do and the results either way were inescapable.

As for the verses like "vessels made for honor or dishonor" I don't see those relating to salvation so much as disposition in that some are ordained as Kings and others as servants. As for the prophecies foretelling future events,... they are all directly related to His plan and man's choice to either trust and obey or not, no matter how insane it seems like in Jeremiah when He has Israel taken into captivity... that must've been a most difficult proposition for the children of Israel- something akin to Him presently telling Americans He was going to lead Isis to take over and wants us to marry our children to theirs and build houses together etc... and in 70 years time we'd be ready and He'd come and restore us!? I think many would lose faith in a hurry,... just like they did.

So in lieu of this going way to long and turning into a novel I'll summarize with this,... God is a God of love first and foremost and desires that all men be saved (meaning they love Him back demonstrated by faithful obedience) and if He already knows I will love Him back because He gave me no choice, then that's not love. At the same time if I don't love Him back because He created me in a way that patently prevents it as a possibility and then punishes me for not loving Him back (being saved) then that's not justice. So if someone contends that God has absolute foreknowledge, sovereignty, omniscience, etc... then at some point, if they are honest with themselves in pursuit of truth, will have to contend with these facts. As yet I have found no such thing in the Bible or in my walk with the Lord my God.

Sorry for running long, tho I hope that helps to clarify and not further muddle the point~

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/7 9:07

What a blessing Mr. Barber! Thanks for typing thatâ€” in my mind you made your point perfectly.

Re: Marvin - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2018/4/7 9:49

Quote:
-----Marvin....Hi Bill: I wouldn't get to excited, no blows are going to be thrown, or maybe you just like popcorn?

Marvin my remark had nothing to do with violence, it was meant to say, this is now getting real interesting. And no, can't do popcorn, not good for the BP. :-)

Re: sense - posted by savannah, on: 2018/4/7 12:15

Todd said,

"The only solution that makes sense to me is the one posited by CS Lewis I set forth in an earlier post."

Thanks for posting Todd. You've stated where you are at. And lest I be the cause of you saying things you might be tempted to say which you don't want to, I'll leave it at that.

Re: To All - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2018/4/7 13:50

When we get into these topics here, I really don't understand them with my limited knowledge of God. It is good to know some folks do know everything about God and all he does, so the next time I need to know what God is up to today, who here should I ask? We all do our very best to find â€œevidenceâ€” to support whatever we already believe, this is why these type threads never bear any fruit. JMO...

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/7 14:29

Hi Bill-

There are some topics that give Christians (and unbelievers) great difficulty- even unrest. Some folks are blessed with not having the "need to know"-- my mom is one of them, so is my wife. Others (like me unfortunately) let certain things bother us, or we feel the need to dig a little deeper.

When I was taught in the first church I attended about the "meticulous sovereignty" of God it never sat right with me- and I was only middle school age. I didn't know any different so I just let it bug me- all the way through college age and into my 40s. It bugged me so much that I was at the point where I loved God because I was supposed to but I didn't like Him very much over this sovereignty/free-will issue. I know that sounds awful but its the truth. Then I exposed myself to teachers that taught other viewpoints and lo and behold I started to feel more confident in the way God really WAS and as a result I was able to grow closer to the Lord.

So, my response to you is that you are blessed to be able to allow things to just roll off your back. You are obviously confident in your relationship with God so that is truly wonderful.

Re: Todd - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2018/4/7 17:35

Very well said Mr. Todd...and you're right! I am able to let most everything roll off my back, and I am very confident in my relationship with God.

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/7 21:50

Hi Brother Fletcher: I'll respond as best I can.

Fletcher said...

"then in effect God created at least one man without the option or ability to repent in response to Christ and then punishes that man for not repenting and turning to Christ all while creating another man whom also has no choice but by the will of God does repent in response to Christ and is thereby subsequently rewarded,

Marvin says. All men are created this way, for all are sinners, none seek after God, no not one. God must himself prepare the man by way of providence, the work of the Holy Spirit and the entrance of the word of God into the heart. Without this, man will not turn to God. Even as Brother Blaine has recently posted of numerous Muslims having dreams or visions, they then believe and come to Christ. Without this preparatory work man lives and loves his sin and stays where it is comfortable.

Man's will is always 100% of the time a responder to the gospel, it is not an initiator of faith.

Fletcher said...

"Christ and then punishes that man for not repenting and turning to Christ"

Marvin said...Man is punished for his sin, not for failing to heed the call, this failure to heed the call would be additional to all his other condemning sins.

The multitudes who have not heard the gospel died in their sins, these were not punished for refusing Christ (for Christ was not offered) but they died in their sins and for their sins they will be punished accordingly.

Fletcher said...

"where is there any glory in that for Christ?"

God will get glory from all his works, for all of them are righteous, the vessel itself was not glorifying, but God's actions upon that vessel are, and in that glory God will be seen as righteous and holy.

(at the end of a beautiful testimony)

Fletcher said...

"So you see, the God that saves me gave me a choice."

Marvin said...As I answered earlier, it was because God himself opened your heart and mind to him, you responded, your decision was due to his working and the giving of grace. God authored your salvation and authored the means he used to effect your salvation...Praise God for that.

Fletcher said...

"if God already knew all this would happen, meaning the choices I've made, and in fact I'm pre-programmed to do so,... there'd be no glory for Christ in that as it's tantamount to being forced to do a thing that He made me to do and the results either way were inescapable."

Marvin said... There is nothing in scripture that turns God's election and subsequent grace-work upon a sinner into the equivalent of fatalism. God makes us willing in the day of his power. This means he moves upon our hearts to say "yes", which is done freely, not because of the intrinsic power of the human will, but because of the in-working power of the Holy Spirit. He didn't force you into salvation because he elected you, he opened your eyes, convinced you of your need for him and gave you faith...which my dear brother has brought you to salvation and a knowing of God's love through forgiveness of your sins. God authored this, God was patient and kind all through your waywardness and when the time was right quickened faith in you to respond, which you did.

Fletcher said...

"and if He already knows I will love Him back because He gave me no choice, then that's not love. At the same time if I don't love Him back because He created me in a way that patently prevents it as a possibility and then punishes me for not loving Him back (being saved) then that's not justice. So if someone contends that God has absolute foreknowledge, sovereignty, omniscience, etc... then at some point, if they are honest with themselves in pursuit of truth, will have to contend with these facts. "

Marvin said...

the grace of God does not come to a man to convince him to love God, God's grace comes because he cannot love God as he should, he never will, he never had the power in himself to give to Christ, what Christ is worthy of receiving. Therefore God undertakes to send his Son into the world to save sinners, He saves them from start to finish, he is the actual and true author and finisher of our faith. We were dead, therefore we needed a life giving word. We were dead in sins, therefore we needed the Spirit of God to convict of sin. We were dead in sin, therefore the Spirit of God convicts of judgment.

t, which we will all receive and which we all inwardly at some time fear. We were dead in sin, therefore God reveals he is righteous and points us to the object of faith Himself, and shows in our hearts that faith can receive, so we pray, the Spirit of God grips us and we actually trust.

My brother, in all our willing and believing and repenting and hoping and praying...for it to be effectual and saving it must be God empowered from start to finish.

This is what I believe.

Lastly;
Fletcher said...

"As for the verses like 'vessels made for honor or dishonor' I don't see those relating to salvation so much as disposition in that some are ordained as Kings and others as servants."

Marvin said...The context of Romans 9 where God makes vessels unto honor and dishonor has nothing to do with the ranks of men in the world, it is explicit

This text is couched in the very subject of God showing mercy to men.

Rom 9:15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

Rom 9:16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

Thanks brother Fletcher for the opportunity to respond and thanks also for candid and straightforward unveiling of your own thoughts.

By the way brother, I barely got my High school diploma I have no academic credentials.

(I did go to a 2 year bible college) but we never discussed theological issues to this level even there.

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/7 21:55

Bill said...

When we get into these topics here, I really don't understand them with my limited knowledge of God. It is good to know some folks do know everything about God and all he does, so the next time I need to know what God is up to today, who here should I ask? We all do our very best to find 'evidence' to support whatever we already believe, this is why these type threads never bear any fruit. JMO...

Bill, cynicism does the heavy lifting for unbelief, it prophecies defeat only because it has no faith God will prevail in some one or something or some situation.

Don't let cynicism rule over your judgment, where anything that requires confrontation and explanation must needs be a work of the flesh.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/7 22:36

//As I answered earlier, it was because God himself opened your heart and mind to him, you responded, your decision was due to his working and the giving of grace. God authored your salvation and authored the means he used to effect your salvation...Praise God for that. //

But does not this conversely mean that God chose not to author others' salvation? To Fletcher's point, if that is true, how can God doom people whom He ordained would receive no help from Him? You say it is because of their sin - granted. But in your scheme man has no power on his own to seek after God. Therefore God must 'give him a

eg upâ€ to use the vernacular. Those he chooses not to give a leg up to are doomed to perdition. If you take this to itâ€™s logical conclusion, God created the vast majority (95%?) to end up in hell.

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/8 1:08

Hi Todd:

There is no other kind of salvation where God does not give man a "leg up".

I didn't develop any scheme per-se, I am offering biblical salvation as the gospels and epistles declare.

It might be well to consider this reality; whether you are arminian or reformed both require belief upon Jesus Christ or you will die in your sin and suffer the punishment for your sins. If 95% are unregenerate, whether you blame them or God for their lack of belief, it's all just semantics to a man in hell. It is God's hell, it is God's judgment, it is God's salvation, It is God's heaven. Man owes none of it, man cannot go to either one without God's judgment or God's mercies. Man didn't develop salvation by grace God in his mercies did.

Man likes to feel like he's a contributor to his salvation, he likes to reverse-engineer his salvation testimony to emphasize the repentance HE DID, and the prayers HE DID and the belief HE DID and the life HE GAVE.

God owes no man salvation, he gives it according to his own purpose in Jesus Christ.

Allow me to repeat. God owes no man salvation, he gives it according to his own purpose in Jesus Christ.

If God saves any man at all at any time it is a wonderful work of grace and kindness on his part. He is absolutely perfect, just, holy, true, righteous, pure and good no matter how many he cast into the lake of fire or how many he made a place for them among the mansions in heaven.

Salvation, Jesus, the Church, the Gospel are all chess pieces for too many Christians. For too many, they author their own faith, they decide what is fair for God to do or not, they believe their inability to give praise for his own choosing of his own people is a right and godly thing.

In all these things they are terribly mistaken and terribly misled by their mislead errant teachers.

It feels better to some to simply lay all blame upon man that he refused Christ, but I've yet to hear a peep from anyone concerning the vast multitudes who have not heard the gospel and died in their sins. No one seems to find it necessary to address the death of these multiplied millions.

For some they blame the Church, for others they figure ...don't think about it, but others want to know what scripture does with such and the scripture does answer it.

For some they invent a 3rd and 4th way to heaven, namely If you die without hearing the gospel then if you've been a good pagan, you go to heaven. For others, if they have followed their own conscience to the best they can...they go to heaven.

When, the real issue of a Sovereign God is offered, Christians don't like him very much.

Here is the unsaid but the very normative philosophy of men and many Christians..."If God doesn't make all means useful to the saving of every soul, he is not fair, he is unjust and he does not deserve praise from me. I cannot intellectually reconcile his judgment against my own system of justice and equity"

This kind of God makes grace look too much like free grace. This kind of God makes the bible's word "election" to actually be an election. It also makes God a lot scarier because he will remain just and holy and true and righteous no matter how many go to heaven or how many go to hell. His glory is not predicated upon my opinions and understanding of justice and fairness.

If you all want a god that you can reconcile to our own system of justice and equity, you will have to make one up. The scriptures do not offer a saving God, that saves based upon the whim of fairness as perceived by the current culture we live in.

As long as this simple text remains in the Word of God, then it stands against all the arguments of men who attempt to c

riminalize God for having his own will and using it.

Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Eph 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

it was his good pleasure to save men, and if you are saved it was God's good pleasure to do it. Will you take displeasure in him who's pleasure it was to save you?

Rom 9:18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Rom 9:19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

Rom 9:20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

Rom 9:21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

yes, rip it out of the bible, or like so many bible studies, stop at Romans 8, or like so many others refuse to believe this actually means God has a choice and he can exercise it upon who ever he wants and neither vessel...and I mean neither vessel can charge God with unrighteousness.

The withholding of praise for who he actually is, is a revelation of the kind of believe we are, our silence shows truly what we are, and not that God is unjust.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/8 7:45

Boy oh boy Marvin.

I know you have likely sat back many times and thought about the implications of what you posted, but I can't tell you how much it bothers me that reasonable people accept such aspersions against God.

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/4/8 11:08

Brother Marvin,

Firstly thank you for your patience with me and your willingness to reason together:) It's not my intent to change your position so much as it is to honestly express myself in how the Lord reveals Himself to me.

It would seem we have different understandings of certain scriptures and doctrines and that (for me) is not an issue and I do enjoy the exercise you afford me as it's easy for me to get a bit lazy and I appreciate very much your push back as it requires of me to take heed of how God reveals Himself to you and study ever more His word and plan:)

It's observable that when we hold a strong opinion we sometimes find it difficult to understand how someone else can hold an opposing view. Often emotions get involved and our flesh wins the day but you have been quite gracious in disagreement and may God be glorified in that:)

One of the scriptures you mentioned that we understand differently is the passage in Ephesians.... where I see predestined for adoption as relating more directly to sanctification/being conformed to the image of Christ as surely everyone who has come to faith in Christ is predestined to also be conformed to His image.

Another place where we understand differently is in our role in salvation itself... You understand that it rests wholly upon God and I see that we must utilize the gift of faith, which He has given a measure to all men, in response to Him and continue to do so so as to stay saved. So (for me) we in fact do play a part albeit a reciprocal one to His initiation.

After praying it occurred to me that we begin and end in totally different places when reading certain passages of scripture that require our participation. (ie; Hebrews 2:3) I see it as a choice and you see it as an act of God's sovereignty. You

see my position as illogical and unreconcilable according to your understanding and in your understanding you are correct as it certainly would be so. However I could say the same of yours according to my understanding. At the end of the day we all act in faith in accordance to that which we believe, meaning belief predicates faith and (as far as I can see) is an inescapable fact even for non-Christians. So I confess that I find you to be faithful to your beliefs and I believe God will honor that and that is enough for me to call you my brother in Christ in spite of our contrasting understanding of certain aspects of God's glorious plan of redemption:) On the essential matters we seem to be in lock step and my hope is that Christ is magnified in that<

Blessings upon you dear brother and again thank you for your continued patience with me:)

Re: Marvin - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2018/4/8 13:38

Marvin said.."Bill, cynicism does the heavy lifting for unbelief, it prophecies defeat only because it has no faith God will prevail in someone or something or some situation.

Don't let cynicism rule over your judgment, where anything that requires confrontation and explanation must needs be a work of the flesh".

Marvin, I personally believe there is a lot of cynicism on here everyday, I'm probably the least cynical here, simply because I don't understand a lot of the word. I surely could not even begin to answer the question is there anything God doesn't know. I have a great relationship with him, but he's never gets into what he doesn't know, just what he does know, and that's the most important to me.

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/8 19:00

Hi Brother Fletcher:

It's not important for me to have "my truth" and you have "your truth", the ungodly and pagans can do that, we are to buy the truth and sell it not. One of us cannot be right, our understandings of scripture cannot both be right and proper interpretations of scripture.

I too appreciate your candor and godly responses to me, where your Christ-likeness is evident.

I was Arminian in my faith for many years, I taught and read Arminian theology, I understand it very well and accordingly understand where it deviates from biblical truth.

It does so precisely at that point where it requires God to sacrifice what he has said of himself.

A God that chooses (and his choice overrules all human choices) when applied to the salvation of men, Arminianism finds that distasteful and devises reasoning from other texts where human choice is encumbant.

A God that fore-knows-all creates fear in men, they have been so inundated with our individualistic culture that scripture encroachment upon that individualism (and its inviolability) demands a theological repositioning.

So accordingly as I found myself required to do in my younger days, I refuse today. I find the scriptures will join hand in hand on so many issues, I can walk lock-step with human responsibility and yet know by faith God's sovereign inner working in me and all other things is how God created this world to function.

As to human participation, Neither I or any orthodox reformed dismiss or negate human participation. What we emphasize is not "I will, I repented, I believed, I prayed, I surrendered, I gave my heart, I confessed and so on. We do not emphasize man's response simply because it is a response, it is not the author of the repentance or the faith or the prayer or the surrender. We are to glory in God in our salvation, meaning, what is important is Christ in me, and I in Christ, I am nothing of myself but Christ is all so, as I seek to glory and honor God, it's not about what human will can chose or not chose, it's about who God chose and what he does with those he did chose.

My brother, you are saved and I am saved not because we chose but because God had a choice about us and he determined to bring salvation to us...and thereby glorify himself in our salvation. But do not be deceived in any way, if he chose not to save us, he would still be equally glorified to show the world, angels and all creation, he is righteous in all his affairs with every man ever born.

To many Christians, it's important to them to be on par with God in regards to 'really important choices'.

But, I will boldly say, neither you or I would have chosen God for simply being the God he is.

How do I know this? Because when Scripture reveals who God is...even as bible reading truth-seeking Christians we still push away the biblical God that makes choices about us that we have no say in.

It's for this very reason brother Fletcher, God didn't leave the precious salvation he gave you up to you. You may think it was all coming down to your decision, but it was never at that critical juncture where your salvation was to be affected, it was in eternity past where God determined to save Fletcher and bring him to himself and show him the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Re: - posted by Martyr (), on: 2018/4/9 1:25

You guys sound like a bunch of high schoolers telling the class what "Catcher in the Rye" means to me. You try to decipher the writings of Paul rather than be like Paul was when he wrote those things. Perhaps there was more to his thinking, his motives and thoughts and intentions that lie BEHIND what is written that is key to interpretation, things that you can only share in by being in the same place in Christ as he was.

I use Paul as way of example, the same applies to the other writings. When I read conversations like these I see that the interpretation of the writings of the saints has become the key to salvation and knowledge rather than the Christ who beats the heart that flows the blood through your veins.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/9 8:26

The Minister's Daughter
By John Greenleaf Whittier

In the minister's morning sermon
He had told of the primal fall,
And how thenceforth the wrath of God
Rested on each and all.

And how of His will and pleasure,
All souls, save a chosen few,
Were doomed to the quenchless burning,
And held in the way thereto.

Yet never by faith's unreason
A saintlier soul was tried,
And never the harsh old lesson
A tenderer heart belied.

And, after the painful service
On that pleasant Sabbath day,
He walked with his little daughter
Through the apple-bloom of May.

Sweet in the fresh green meadows
Sparrow and blackbird sung;
Above him their tinted petals
The blossoming orchards hung.

Around on the wonderful glory
The minister looked and smiled;
'How good is the Lord who gives us
These gifts from His hand, my child.

'Behold in the bloom of apples
And the violets in the sward

A hint of the old, lost beauty
Of the Garden of the Lord!

Then up spake the little maiden,
Treading on snow and pink
'O father! these pretty blossoms
Are very wicked, I think.

'Had there been no Garden of Eden
There never had been a fall;
And if never a tree had blossomed
God would have loved us all.'

'Hush, child!' the father answered,
'By His decree man fell;
His ways are in clouds and darkness,
But He doeth all things well.

'And whether by His ordaining
To us cometh good or ill,
Joy or pain, or light or shadow,
We must fear and love Him still.'

'Oh, I fear Him!' said the daughter,
'And I try to love Him, too;
But I wish He was good and gentle,
Kind and loving as you.'

The minister groaned in spirit
As the tremulous lips of pain
And wide, wet eyes uplifted
Questioned his own in vain.

Bowing his head he pondered
The words of the little one;
Had he erred in his life-long teaching?
Had he wrong to his Master done?

To what grim and dreadful idol
Had he lent the holiest name?
Did his own heart, loving and human,
The God of his worship shame?

And lo! from the bloom and greenness,
From the tender skies above,
And the face of his little daughter,
He read a lesson of love.

No more as the cloudy terror
Of Sinai's mount of law,
But as Christ in the Syrian lilies
The vision of God he saw.

And, as when, in the clefts of Horeb,
Of old was His presence known,
The dread Ineffable Glory
Was Infinite Goodness alone.

Thereafter his hearers noted
In his prayers a tenderer strain,
And never the gospel of hatred
Burned on his lips again.

And the scoffing tongue was prayerful,
And the blinded eyes found sight,
And hearts, as flint aforetime,
Grew soft in his warmth and light.

Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2018/4/9 8:50

Happy Monday Everyone! May the Lord Bless Your Week.

Re: Happy Monday - posted by savannah, on: 2018/4/9 10:49

Happy Monday Bill!

I didn't know you were going to wish everyone a happy Monday.

But Jesus did!

John 6:48-71

I am the bread of life.
Your ancestors ate manna in the desert, but they died.
But the bread that comes down from heaven is of such a kind that whoever eats it will not die.
I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If you eat this bread, you will live forever. The bread that I will give you is my flesh, which I give so that the world may live."
This started an angry argument among them. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they asked.
Jesus said to them, "I am telling you the truth: if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in yourselves.
Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them to life on the last day.
For my flesh is the real food; my blood is the real drink.
Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood live in me, and I live in them.
The living Father sent me, and because of him I live also. In the same way whoever eats me will live because of me.
This, then, is the bread that came down from heaven; it is not like the bread that your ancestors ate, but then later died.
Those who eat this bread will live forever."
Jesus said this as he taught in the synagogue in Capernaum.

Many of his followers heard this and said, "This teaching is too hard. Who can listen to it?"
WITHOUT BEING TOLD, JESUS KNEW that they were grumbling about this, so he said to them, "Does this make you want to give up?
Suppose, then, that you should see the Son of Man go back up to the place where he was before?
What gives life is God's Spirit; human power is of no use at all. The words I have spoken to you bring God's life-giving Spirit.
Yet some of you do not believe." (JESUS KNEW FROM THE VERY BEGINNING who were the ones that would not believe AND which one would betray him.)
And he added, "This is the very reason I told you that not one person can come to me unless the Father makes it possible for them to do so."
Because of this, many of Jesus' followers turned back and would not go with him any more.
So he asked the twelve disciples, "And you—would you also like to leave?"
Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life.
And now we believe and know that you are the Holy One who has come from God."

Jesus replied, "I chose the twelve of you, didn't I? Yet one of you is a devil!"

He was talking about Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. For Judas, even though he was one of the twelve disciples, was going to betray him.

There's a blind woman in the church I attend. She's got to be led by the hand to get around. Yet she sees clearly what is written above.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/9 11:03

I plan on it Bill- the dogwoods are beautiful, the redbuds are still hanging in there, 80s later this week and the pine pollen is outta here!

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/9 16:07

Todd: The poem of a compromised preacher.

What did I just read? I read where Satan spoke through a little girl and the preacher compromised his faith.

If flowers and clouds singing birds tell the story of the gospel I will concede, but, so far, no one is saved by a nice spring day. They are saved by way of a bloody man on a bloody cross...because those walking in the garden willed that they keep their garden and kill the creator of it.

Hath God said, there is wrath?

Hath God said, there is judgment and an Elect?

Hath God said, the law stands against us to judge?

Now, he preaches no judgment to come, but all flowers and brightness and joyful Christian fun, Oh how he lies, and now unfaithful he gains many a new convert, but to what? A god of his own invention? That god cannot save.

The poem is anathema.

It is EXACTLY this kind of thing that spawns Open Theism, it spawns a purgatorial hell, no real lake of fire, it spawns a Jesus that requires no cross, it births converts to a Christianity that has no life, only the soulless life sprinkled with the sugar of Christian niceties and sentimentality.

You need not even be reformed to recognize this poem is the artfulness of exchanging the truth for a lie.

Please allow me to muster the preachers this poem condemns as preachers of a gospel of hate

None of them are reformed

Ravenhill, Cymbala, Conlon, Katz and easily dozens and dozens more.

At least you could say, Marv the greek says this so your interpretation is wrong, or the context says this so your interpretation is wrong; instead I am rebutted with a 'garden scene' where Satan is again creating doubt in the revealed will of God.

In conclusion, either what I have said is now being so mischaracterized it is being called a gospel of hate, or there is a spirit at work here that hates the God of scripture and it seeks to sway us all toward a god of our own making. God forbid we speak a vernacular of truth but in our hearts we are far from it.

I will end posting further on this thread,

What I have posted has been slandered and what I have asserted as scripture was never refuted, but now unjustly maligned.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/9 18:21

Marvin, there has been nothing personal in any of our discussion to date so why are you taking it personally now? I don't want you to take the following personal either, but I feel compelled to say it.

Wesley said Calvinism is a "Hellish blasphemy" and he was absolutely right. It makes God a monster, who creates multitudes of helpless beings to torment forever to show off how big and mighty He is (i.e. for His glory). How demented, how devilish. Calvinism may be the biggest libel and slander upon the character of God and the Cross that Satan has ever cooked up. And that's saying a lot.

All the gibberish about Sovereign grace, etc is high sounding nonsense. Calvinism makes our Lord a Sovereign DEVIL, not a Sovereign God.

Any version of Calvinism that says God chose certain of his human creatures in advance to send to hell and certain others to heaven is monstrous. You have tried to characterize it as "super fair" (like an old youth pastor of mine tried to do but it didn't sit right with me then either). You have tried to argue that since none deserve heaven then God is super fair for sending some there instead casting everyone into perdition. The only problem with that idea is *that, per Calvinism, God created the system!*

Re: nothing personal - posted by savannah, on: 2018/4/9 19:11

Casey James Lawhorn, 23, said on Facebook that he killed his mother and a close friend April 8, 2018 in East Ridge, Tenn. (Allie Caren/The Washington Post).

From his Facebook post confession;

"As I sit here in Mississippi, writing this on the side of I-59 south after my car broke down, what I look forward to is the nothingness after death. I've spent a lot of time thinking about murder, wondering what it feels like. But I've barely felt anything."

"Since so many people keep trying to reach out to me on Facebook, I figure I can just say my piece once here and be done with it. Before I start, I need to emphasize that I take full responsibility for my actions. Nothing anyone has or has done to me caused this, my decisions and my failures are my own."

"I don't want or need forgiveness from anyone. What I did is unforgivable. Nothing happens after death, but if there is a hell, I'm going to be in the lake of ice at the bottom."

Sounds like these no-hell authors and supporters are making headway.

This is as serious as it gets!

Will the real preachers please stand up!

But even if one were to rise from the dead, many would still refuse to believe.

But...lets not take it personal....!!!

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/9 19:22

Todd: I didn't take the poem personally, I took the poem to be a silly sentimental tool to characterize what I said as evil and replace it with a tearful feeling 'that all is ok, God is not at all a God who punishes sinners.'

My intent in engaging this thread was to provide a place for each side to offer their interpretations, but when you do this, you interrupt what might be a good study and transform it into a sharp division. Now, after such strong allegations made, the only 'fair thing' is for those alleging blasphemy to show where it was done, and that it was truly blasphemy.

Unless you are a universalist Todd, every Arminian that believes in the exclusive claims of Christ and the necessity of true faith in Christ faces the same accusations as you've launched against my teachings.

I said my teachings, I never quoted Calvin or any other reformer, I quoted the apostles and Christ.

I welcome you to dissect my postings and locate these alleged blasphemies and show how I have misconstrued scripture. If I have been in error I will happily apologize and refute my own statements.

But mere characterizations and allegations are not proof, so, unless you actually show where I have blasphemed God, your allegations are no more than blustering opinion.

Your last post does show what you think of Calvinism, that's fine, you can think that if you want, but to prove your allegations have any merit, you must do more than quote Wesley and call what I believe devilish.

You must realize you impugn the spiritual greats that are often quoted and emulated on this website, so while you may find me easy to overcome, you will also find you are tearing down all the rest of these who quote them in hopes of revival, godliness in the Church, true repentance, godly preaching and evangelizing.

If you do not actually prove your position, you may own your opinion still but no one need fear they are in error or that they have read the scriptures in error, nor do they need to reconsider their own opinion.

Lastly, I want to hear from you, Not a long list of anti-Calvinists and their assertions that have long been refuted or challenged.

If you decide not to respond to my entreaty, I will quit the thread as I stated earlier. However, I will know that you have accused me without proof.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/9 20:00

Hey Marvin-

I have been involved in discussions about Calvinism/Arminianism/Whateverism on this and other forums where individual scriptures were debated ad nauseum. I have a chart that lists all the relevant scriptures and what they mean to each camp. But the debate rages on. Just like the eschatology debate rages on. Why? Because scriptures are not clear 100%.

So it boils down to a matter of philosophy and how we read scripture. Take this one for example:

"About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, 26 and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. 27 When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.' 29 And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. 30 Then he brought them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' 31 And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.' 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. 34 Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God."

We can take the passage at face value, or we can twist it like this:

When Paul admonished the Philippian jailer to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and he would be saved along with his household, Paul did not know if the jailer was predestined to be saved or not, and so had to have been thinking to himself, "Gee, I hope this guy is one of the lucky predestined ones and that God is just about to grant His irresistible grace upon him, because what I've just told him to do is absolutely and utterly impossible for him to do. I may have actually deceived him--giving him a false hope-- if he's not predestined for salvation. I also dearly hope that all the members of his household are also predestined for salvation and that God is about to grant His irresistible grace on them as well, otherwise I may have deceived this jailer about them also. Maybe I should have rather just told him the truth about his total depravity and God's irresistible grace."

How could any consistent and thoughtful Calvinist tell people that they will be saved if they believe in the Lord Jesus without having such thoughts go through his mind?

The NT is replete with admonitions for men to repent. On Mars Hill Paul said that God was "commanding all people everywhere to repent." If God predestined in advance who would go to hell and who would go to heaven (Calvin clearly taught this) then the commands in scripture for all men to repent is non-sensical, for only the "elect" predestined favorites of God would ever repent-- a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The idea that God created a hell of eternal torment into which he will cast those humans he created solely for that eternal end, for His glory, is repellant. You do not think it is, because you say God can do what He wants. He can indeed- the question on the table is what He in fact does. And, my friend, He does not do that. I am not here even questioning the idea of eternal torment. I will grant that it is true for the sake of this discussion. But the idea that God unilaterally picks and chooses who goes there based on His whim is the repellant part.

Abraham asked the rhetorical question "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The answer is a resounding "Yes!"

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/9 20:51

Todd: Thanks for the reply:

Im not interested in What Jacob Arminius or Jean Calvin would answer, I was interested in what you would answer.

So, the Act's text. That's a great example to start.

We will take the Act's text as scripture relate it, not the twisted/your version.

When Paul preached the gospel to the lost was it how you characterized it...in terms of "who knows who's the elect, so I don't know whether to offer the gospel or to think I am deceiving them with false hope?"

I know of NO reformed preacher that offers the gospel in such an ignorant and unfaithful fashion. Who knows, there's always somebody on the extreme, but Im not that guy.

I have elaborated numerous times in various postings how I offer the gospel, it contains none of the silliness of the twisted version you've portrayed.

1. I do not offer the gospel based on 'who I know to be elect or non-elect' no gospel preacher does this, reformed or not. This therefore excludes this characterization as false.
2. I do not offer in-house theological terms to sinners, I offer them the law as Jesus did, "thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not lie etc." So, based upon their own confession of inward guilt, they understand they have sinned against both God and man...and most will openly admit this.
3. While it is true man does not have the power to believe, repent or truly understand his guilt before God, God's Spirit appoints the preaching of that word and does the invisible work of conviction to convince him of his sin and his own culpability. Thereby God works upon men that they might believe.
4. I offer good news to men who understand they are of themselves guilty...that's bad news, but unless they understand their need my offer of provision for that need is non-sensical. I offer a sin forgiving and merciful loving God, who is calling men to repent and believe.

So, tell me again, where I leave out repentance based upon God's foreknowledge? I don't, I do NOT preach God's foreknowledge, I preach the revealed word of God as is found in scripture, all reformed do this, so do the arminians. The only time foreknowledge is good to be included is when you tell the sinner "God knows you've sinned from the beginning, both you and him know in detail what commandments you've broken"

But to tell the sinner, God has elected or not-elected them is not a gospel message and has never been a gospel message in any reformed preacher I've read (and I've read many) Why? Because God does not predicate our gospel message based upon the preacher/church/witness/evangelist knowing the secret mind of God...or has access to the lambs book of life to read who's name is written therein.

We preach based upon the command to go into all the world and preach the gospel. That's it. It's an act of obedience to declare the good news to every person.

If some are not saved and I have offered the gospel, I have been obedient, not as you say in some twisted version.

Both Arminian and Reformed do this without impunity.

My responsibility for a man's salvation stops at my right and clear declaration of the gospel.

In the mean time, in no doubtful manner as you describe, I pray they might believe, I pray God saves them, I pray God reveals his Son to them, I seek to show compassion and mercies, I offer them the gospel and offer them help or assistance if they are in need. This very thing Jesus did and so do the reformed and Arminian.

If you so hate the god you think I have, it is because you have invented a god I do not have, nor preach, serve or minister in any such manner as you describe.

You loath and condemn what I do not do, you depict a mind and heart I do not have, you condemn what I do not believe.

In short my friend, this is a straw-man you've burned down, I suffer no ill effect from it.

I have not blasphemed the worthy name by which I am called, I have not maligned God by believing his apostles who told me God has an elect whom he foreknew. This is explicit in scripture, it is not as some say a kind of theological fuzzy window that I look through and imagine all the things I see.

I also realize since you do not believe in eternal punishment, it is no jump for you to dismiss any "choices" God may make. As Fletcher said loosely 'it's logical in your system of thought'. But that system of thought is filled with inconsistencies from a biblical view point.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/9 22:04

Marvin -

You realize that the "twisted" version of Paul's dealing with the jailer was a rhetorical device? I was not suggesting that you or any Calvinist actually talks that way. The point was to show the problem with the Calvinist perspective of this simple episode memorialized in scripture: that the jailer asked for help, Paul told him what to do, and he did it! Hallelujah!

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/9 22:43

Todd: Unless the rhetorical device was intended to depict an actual reformed point-of-witness, why use it?

It misrepresents what I do, It misrepresents how a reformed Christian evangelizes.

You created a caricature, but with that caricature you asked "How could any consistent and thoughtful Calvinist tell people that they will be saved if they believe in the Lord Jesus without having such thoughts go through his mind?"

I answered you, I have no such kind of thoughts, my thoughts are directed at believing for Jesus to answer my prayers, to save the people I witness to or preach to on occasion.

Paul did it in speaking to the Jailer, I've done it to all kinds of people in many many places and Jesus has answered my prayers and saved people.

My response was to show that the distorted view of Evangelism-with-Calvinist-theology has no truth in it.

I take people out witnessing on the streets, I teach them to share the gospel, to listen to the person, to listen to the Spirit of God and trust God to give them the right words spoken in faith and love. Never at anytime has any like-kind doubtings and double-speak been brought forth from me or any whom I have trained and helped.

We are learning to love our neighbors as ourselves, to share the love of Jesus in all the various gifts God has given us, though I am in fact a nobody-special at my Church, that does not interfere with God getting glory from our faith in him, our preaching his gospel and our kindness and outreach to those living next to us.

Re: A word of caution - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2018/4/10 6:47

I have been following the discussion, seeking to understand the ideas being conveyed, searching the scriptures to compare the thoughts on the forum with the thoughts of the apostles, and may join the exchange at some time after careful, prayerful deliberation.

However, this scripture was brought to mind due to the recent postings - "in a multitude of words..... there will be a missing of the mark."

May we walk in a godly restraint - "in the meekness of wisdom." The heart of the righteous studies to answer. It rust that everyone seeks to be guided in this way, but "in a multitude of words" there is a greater probability that error and attitude may slip in unintentionally.

I hope to join in the discussion at some point, focusing on HOW faith is quickened in the heart of the man who believes. Until then, I hope that restraint and respect will strain out the even the smallest amount of unwholesome words.

Mak

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/10 7:13

Hello Mak- please join in when you can

Marvin- I know you are a smart man so I have to conclude that you are being purposefully obtuse in regard to my Philipian jailer post. The whole point was to show that despite the clarity in scripture of that episode, TULIP is lurking beneath the surface like a shark ready to devour its simplicity.

I am afraid that we are at impasse which of course always happens in these discussions. You have retreated further into your paradigm and I have retreated further into mine. Neither has convinced the other of another way of seeing things. Like I said, this does not boil down to a simple reading of scripture but rather how we view the nature and goodness of God. Because God is God, you can accept the idea that He does objectively bad things because He is God and can do what He wants. I do not believe God does objectivity bad things because He is God and therefore will not do objectively bad things.

And I will never, ever change my mind in that regard.

Re: A possible direction - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2018/4/10 7:49

Here is what I have been searching the scriptures and paying special attention to - "prepositions". Yes, the actual grammar the apostles used. This is where "sovereignty" becomes practical for me. The Holy Spirit used "chosen vessels" who "chose" specific grammar to express their grace given understanding.

For example, much is built upon the idea that faith is "of" God. The idea being that God is the source of the faith that is operating in man. Those who stress this, lay heavy emphasis that man is incapable of independent action and the "generative of origin" is the scriptural basis for their position.

The reason I was compelled to learn Greek is because I want to know the exact word and letter the apostles used. How else can an interpretation of a passage be tested?! I was privileged to have an old batchelor bee keeper winter with me several years. He was self taught in Koine Greek and he often lovingly showed me how my expression was wrong by

comparing my expression to the exact grammar of the relevant passage. This introduced me into the way to test my own preformed thoughts and assumptions against the God guided sovereignly chosen grammar of the actual texts.

In the current discussion I have discovered that the vast majority of "prepositions" used in connection to faith are not in the genitive. For example "faith towards God", "faith unto God", and "faith upon God" are vastly superior in quantity than the rare "faith of God".

The implication for this is profound, for those who make much of faith being "of God" build a doctrinal understanding upon this foundation. How can such a foundation be tested? One way is to search for the prevalent way faith is expressed in the New Testament. Without any dispute, faith is expressed not as a "passive" experience originating "of" God, but an "active indicative" by an individual "towards" or "unto" God.

Mak

Allow me to add - I DO believe that God is the source of every good and perfect gift. I am re-studying HOW faith is imparted to man and I plan to share what I have discovered in reviewing what the apostles wrote. Perhaps someone will precede me by sharing your own discovery of this. I love it when I read or hear that another brother has discovered the same gems that have become a treasure to me.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/10 8:44

Mak wrote: I am re-studying HOW faith is imparted to man and I plan to share what I have discovered in reviewing what the apostles wrote. Perhaps someone will precede me by sharing your own discovery of this.

I am not sure what exactly you mean, but for me faith was imparted at a very young age due to my mother's spending time reading bible stories and praying with me. So it was by hearing, and by her witness. (She still does the same today).

Re: - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2018/4/10 9:17

You are on track for there is a means God has wrought to impart faith within the heart of men. This means is "the gospel" - for "the gospel is the POWER (Enabling) of God for the salvation of everyone believing.

"Since the day you HEARD" is an expression of Paul found in his letters to the churches. It is not surprising then that Paul understood that "faith comes from the thing heard, and the thing heard, from the word (rhema) of Christ."

We should not be surprised that the "word of Christ" when heard by men can generate faith even among those dead in trespass and sins. Jesus said, a time is coming, and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear shall live.

The word of Christ is the power of God, living and active and able to penetrate to the very core of men's being. It is able to quicken the dead to life. The gospel is this power of God. The GOSPEL was that which was working in the Thessalonians and the same gospel was WORKING in every place. Men are enabled to believe by the hearing of the gospel of our salvation.

Mak

Re: - posted by StirltUp (), on: 2018/4/10 9:30

Brothers,

I am certainly a novice when it comes to these doctrines but I must confess that there is a "mysterious" side to "faith" as we understand it.

"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God"

I understand that as the preaching of the gospel of Christ and the hearing of it causing faith to spring up in the hearts of people and leading to their salvation, stated very simply.

The obvious question is this: Two people hear the same gospel message spoken by the same person under the same anointing of the Holy Spirit.

One is saved, the other not. Why?

Does it come down to HOW each person hears, the willingness of their hearts to hear and to obey the message preached?

The parable of the sower sowing the seed in different types of earth?

That still begs the question: Why was my heart correctly prepared and receptive and not my neighbor's?

Why me Lord? What have I ever done.....goes the old song

There is mystery here brothers.

Perhaps the quote from Charles Spurgeon in the other thread on God's Sovereignty is the wisest route to take.

Blessings,

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/4/10 9:48

//That still begs the question: Why was my heart correctly prepared and receptive and not my neighbor's?//

“You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.”

Acts 7:51

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2018/4/10 12:07

William wrote "Does it come down to HOW each person hears, the willingness of their hearts to hear and to obey the message preached?

The parable of the sower sowing the seed in different types of earth?"

Exactly!

Faith is available to all, through the word of Christ. That is clear and it is not just handed out selectively to selected persons. It comes to all who hear. It is often referred to as prevenient grace (e.g. by Wesley), i.e. it is the gift of faith through the word that enables men to then respond in saving faith toward God. But it can be ignored or resisted. No such thing as irresistible grace in scripture.

Re: William - posted by savannah, on: 2018/4/10 13:17

William,

Greetings!

I offer this counsel to you. The Word and prayer is enough for the Spirit to enlighten you to His Truth. All else are merely helps, yet nonetheless they may help or they may hinder.

Here's George Mueller's testimony, how he went about his search for the deep truths of God;

Before this period I had been much opposed to the doctrines of election, particular redemption, and final persevering grace; so much so that, a few days after my arrival at Teignmouth I called election a devilish doctrine. I did not believe that I had brought myself to the Lord, for that was too manifestly false; but yet I held, that I might have resisted finally.

And further, I knew nothing about the choice of God's people, and did not believe that the child of God, when once made so, was safe for ever. In my fleshly mind I had repeatedly said, "If once I could prove that I am a child of God for ever, I

might go back into the world for a year or two, and then return to the Lord, and at last be saved."

But now I was brought to examine these precious truths by the word of God. Being made willing to have no glory of my own in the conversion of sinners, but to consider myself merely as an instrument; and being made willing to receive what the Scriptures said; I went to the Lord, reading the New Testament from the beginning, with a particular reference to these truths. To my great astonishment I found that the passages which speak decidedly for election and persevering grace were about four times as many as those which speak apparently against these truths; and even those few, shortly after, when I had examined and understood them, served to confirm me in the above doctrines.

As to the effect which my belief in these doctrines had on me, I am constrained to state, for God's glory, that though I am still exceedingly weak, and by no means so dead to the lusts of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, as I might and as I ought to be, yet, by the grace of God, I have walked more closely with Him since that period.

My life has not been so variable, and I may say that I have lived much more for God than before. And for this have I been strengthened by the Lord, in a great measure, through the instrumentality of these truths. For in the time of temptation, I have been repeatedly led to say:

"Should I thus sin? I should only bring misery into my soul for a time, and dishonour God; for, being a son of God for ever, I should have to be brought back again, though it might be in the way of severe chastisement."

Thus, I say, the electing love of God in Christ (when I have been able to realize it) has often been the means of producing holiness, instead of leading me into sin. It is only the notional apprehension of such truths, the want of having them in the heart, whilst they are in the head, which is dangerous.

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/4/10 16:02

Todd: T.U.L.I.P. is a rebuttal arminianism, it is not an axe to chop down other Christians or a boat anchor to stop the sharing of the gospel. All of this is your perceptions, which being distorted now skew how you think the reformed minister the gospel.

Mak, included a few tidbits of what it means when men begin to believe, and that is by the work of the Spirit of God in conjunction with the preaching of the word of God. This very thing the reformed and Arminian do because they believe 'faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God'. So, God using means, brings men to himself.

This is the bedrock of reformed faith, namely the preaching of the word of God, where instead of traditions of men, false teachers and false doctrines, human ideologies, admixtures of superstitions...the word of God judges all of these.

All of this is my back yard.

lastly, since you never proved me to have blasphemed God, but left that accusation un-proven it is certain you are only ground standing.

God is not bad to make his own decisions, he is not bad to choose a people for himself, he is not bad for punishing sinners. You are implying I am making God bad when I attribute to him the very things He has claimed to do.

Savannah introduced a lengthy article on the sovereignty of God in salvation...full of scripture references, full of interpretations and conclusions, let someone scrutinize what was said by Jonathan Edwards and pull it apart and prove his interpretations are in error.

The Wesley post in rebuttal contained Wesley's railing against it, but addressed nothing substantive to Edwards article, as such it is only opinion.

My intent was never to pit Edward's words against Wesley's, because what they have said is frozen, there is no more they will bring to the table in this discussion, you and I on the other hand are alive and interacting.

Since you too are frozen in anti-Calvinist reasoning, there is no reason to continue in this vein with you.

Thank you Todd for interacting with me and engaging me where you did. Though my words were against you, my heart is always for you.