

The Entrapment Problem in Arminian Theology

Contents

The Entrapment Problem in Arminian Theology	1
Clarity of Intent.....	2
Executive Summary	3
Core Contradiction.....	3
Philosophical Reinforcement	4
Clarification: On God's Sovereignty	4
Against the Corporate Reinterpretation of "All"	6
Tetelestai: Accomplishment vs. Possibility - The Arminian Redefinition	7
Primary Potential Objections:	7
1) Objection – "Τετέλεσται just means the provision is made; Christ declared the way open, not that every sinner is actually saved."	7
2) Objection – "Finished = end of suffering or fulfilment of role, not legal payment. It's a theological cry of completion, not forensic satisfaction."	7
3) Objection – "Atonement is sufficient for all but efficient only for believers. That preserves universal provision and particular application."	8
4) Objection – "Middle knowledge/Molinism rescues Arminian intuitions: God actualized a world where libertarian agents freely reject although prevenient grace was available."	8
5) Objection – "The New Testament's 'all' language means 'all kinds' or corporate scope, not every individual."	8
6) Objection – "Holding people accountable while their will is incapacitated violates justice; but prevenient grace restores ability, so punishment is fair."	8
7) Objection: "But the Bible says God regrets, desires, or is grieved—so His will must be contingent and His grace resistible."	8
8) Objection: "The tension between God's sovereign grace and human responsibility is a divine mystery or paradox that is beyond reason."	10
9) Objection: "For love to be genuine, it must be freely chosen, which requires the libertarian freedom to reject it. Therefore, God must preserve this freedom."	10
10) Objection: "If Christ did not die for every single person, then the universal gospel call to 'whosoever will' cannot be sincere."	10
11) Objection: "The early church fathers and the historical consensus of the church did not affirm double predestination; therefore, it is an aberration."	10
12) Objection: "A God who sovereignly elects some to salvation and passes over others, leaving them to their just condemnation, is cruel, arbitrary, and monstrous."	11

13) Objection: “Texts like John 1:12 state that to those ‘who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,’ proving that belief must precede the new birth.”	11
14) Objection: “Double-payment is avoided because unbelief is the only unforgiven sin.”	11
15) Objection: “God elects on the basis of foreseen faith.”	11
16) Objection: “1 John 2:2 says Christ is the propitiation for the whole world, so definite atonement is false.”	11
17) Objection: “2 Peter 2:1 says false teachers were ‘bought’ by the Master, so Christ died for them savingly.”	12
18) Objection: “Acts 7:51 shows the Spirit is resistible, therefore grace is resistible.”	12
19) Objection: “Ezekiel 33:11 and 18:23 show God does not desire the death of the wicked, so He wills all to be saved.”	12
20) Objection: “Ephesians 1:13 puts faith before regeneration. ‘Having believed, you were sealed...’ so faith precedes new birth.”	12
21) Objection: “Hebrews 6 and 10 teach real apostasy of the regenerate, so grace is resistible.”	12
22) Objection: "This is just an in-house debate over a secondary doctrine. It doesn't affect the core of the gospel."	12
Is It Another Gospel?	13
Paul's Standard: The Mechanism of Salvation Is Non-Negotiable	13
Another Jesus, Another Spirit, Another Gospel.....	13
The Incoherence of Selective Trinitarianism.....	14
“The Judaizers Were Sincere Too”	15
"But They Trust in Christ!"	15
The Dividing Line: Posture Toward Correction	16
Conclusion: Arminianism as System vs. Arminians as Individuals	16
Proof set	17
Verdict.....	23

Clarity of Intent

Many believers who employ "choice" language in evangelism are not committed Arminians but rather unintentional compatibilists. They instinctively affirm both divine sovereignty in salvation and human responsibility, lacking only the theological precision to articulate compatibilist freedom. When carefully examined, these brothers often acknowledge that God's grace secures rather than merely enables the sinner's response.

I'm not suggesting we need perfect theology—God's standard is not omniscience. But when Scripture speaks clearly, our theology must align with it. The question is whether we will submit to Scripture when our theology is shown to contradict it. Teachability is the dividing line between salvific confusion and damning rebellion.

Further, I do not claim I can judge hearts—and that’s not even what I attempt to do. But Scripture is clear: those who persistently reject correction when confronted with the Word reveal a pattern inconsistent with saving faith (1 John 2:19; 1 Sam 15:23). **The test is not 'Do you agree with this paper?' but 'Will you submit to Scripture when shown your error?'**

Some will read this as harsh. But love does not baptize error. If a brother is drinking poisoned water, the loving act is not to say 'It's fine, you're sincere'—it's to warn him clearly and offer the antidote. This paper is that warning. The stakes are too high for false charity.

This polemic therefore is directed specifically at those who systematically teach prevenient grace theology or wilfully adhere to it in full knowledge, not at well-meaning believers whose imprecise vocabulary masks orthodox convictions. The goal remains theological clarity while preserving evangelical unity where foundational commitments align.

Executive Summary

This brief exposes a **logical and moral collapse** within classical Arminian theology. Specifically, it addresses the **Entrapment Problem**: the idea that God dispenses universal, non-efficacious “grace”, fully foreknowing its ineffectiveness, and then eternally punishes those who fail to respond to it. By ‘prevenient grace’ I mean universal, non-regenerating, resistible enabling.

This analysis rests not on importing a Reformed grid, but on examining Arminian commitments under Scripture’s light. If the result feels like Calvinism, it is only because Calvinism faithfully reflects what Scripture says when Arminian categories collapse. It is a **forensic analysis of Arminianism’s own internal commitments**, and how they fail to cohere. See John 6:37, 44; Eph. 2:1-5, cf. Acts 16:14.

The result is not merely a flawed soteriology, but a false vision of the Trinity. The Father becomes a passive responder to foreseen human decisions. The Son becomes a hypothetical saviour offering possibilities, not securing redemption. The Spirit becomes a frustrated persuader who tries to regenerate hearts but often fails. Such a system may still use biblical words, but it proclaims another god — one whose grace is weak, whose purposes are uncertain, and whose sovereignty is subservient to creaturely will.

At its core, the Entrapment Problem is not just a gospel error. It is a Trinitarian distortion. And that moves this debate from the category of “in-house disagreement” to gospel-level crisis. Scripture does not present a God who tries — it reveals a God who accomplishes. The gospel is not about potentialities. It is about power — the power of the triune God to save whom He wills.

Core Contradiction

Arminianism affirms all four of the following:

1. **Universal Prevenient Grace** – Grace is given to all, enabling a response.
2. **Divine Foreknowledge** – God knows who will and won’t believe.
3. **Resistible Grace** – Grace can be rejected.
4. **Eternal Punishment for Unbelief** – Hell is just for those who don’t believe.

The logical contradiction outlined in the Core Contradiction is the same moral absurdity unmasked by the principle *ought* → *can*. Only effectual grace resolves this tension; all other formulations devolve into entrapment.

Philosophical Reinforcement

The Entrapment Problem exposes the incoherence of a universal but non-efficacious prevenient grace. Appeals to the moral principle *ought* → *can* are often flattened into “no ability, no accountability.” But that is Kant’s maxim, not Augustine’s.

- **Mechanical inability** (e.g., commanding a man without wings to fly) would indeed excuse.
- **Moral inability** (fallen man’s slavery to sin, Rom. 8:7–8) does not excuse but condemns, because it flows from a will that is corrupt and loves darkness (John 3:19).

Augustine sharpened the point:

“Give what You command, and command what You will.” (*Da quod iubes, et iube quod vis*; *Confessions* 10.29, cf. *On the Spirit and the Letter*).

Man’s inability after the Fall (*non posse non peccare*) leaves him guilty, not innocent. The obligation remains, but only God’s sovereign grace supplies the power to obey. Hence Scripture can command all to repent (Acts 17:30) while teaching that only God grants repentance (2 Tim. 2:25).

By contrast, Arminian prevenient grace promises ability without securing it. It offers “help” God knows will fail, then condemns on the basis of that failure. That is entrapment, because the grace itself is structurally impotent. Only effectual grace avoids this collapse: a grace that not only offers, but actually gives, repentance and faith.

Thus, when “grace” is merely potential but fails to overcome this death, it functions as a placebo, not a salvific instrument. Appeals to “corporate” readings of all cannot escape the fact that individuals are still commanded to respond; if the grace is impotent for them, the moral entrapment remains. Likewise, Molinist appeals to “middle knowledge” only relocate the problem: if God withholds sufficient grace from some, He still creates a class of people judged by a standard they cannot fulfill. In contrast, John 6:44, 65 describes divine drawing as intrinsically effectual — all whom the Father draws come, and all whom He gives are raised. The dichotomy is stark: either grace is sovereign and effectual (Reformed theology), or God condemns on the basis of an inadequate gift, which collapses into the very entrapment Arminianism cannot evade.

Potential Objection. “Grace is potentially sufficient; God simply does not actualize it for everyone.”

Response. John 6:44, 65 describes the Father’s drawing as intrinsically effectual: “*No one can come to me unless the Father draws him... All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes I will raise up on the last day.*” If God were merely “drawing” some while leaving others with an ineffective grace, the text would be falsified—the promised outcome (“*will come*”) would not obtain. Thus the “potential sufficiency” thesis collapses into contradiction: either the draw is effectual (Reformed view) or the biblical witness is false.

Clarification: On God’s Sovereignty

The Entrapment Problem is resolved only by effectual grace—a grace that not only enables but *secures* the response it intends. But effectual grace does not operate in isolation. It reflects a larger biblical

pattern: **God's meticulous sovereignty over all things, including the willing choices of His creatures.**

This is not fatalism, nor does it make humans "robots." Scripture consistently presents God as ordaining *both* the ends *and* the means by which those ends come to pass, including the real, responsible choices of creatures. This is compatibilism: divine sovereignty and human responsibility are not mutually exclusive but mutually affirming.

The Biblical Pattern:

- **Genesis 50:20** – "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today." The brothers' choices were real, morally culpable, and evil. God's decree over the same act was sovereign, purposeful, and good. Same event, dual agency, one divine purpose.
- **Acts 2:23** – "This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men." The crucifixion was simultaneously the most wicked act in history (human responsibility) and the center of God's redemptive plan (divine sovereignty). God ordained it; the agents are still guilty.
- **Proverbs 16:9** – "The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps." Human planning is real; divine direction is ultimate.
- **Philippians 2:12-13** – "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." Human working is commanded; divine working is causative.

God's sovereignty is not permission—it is *ordination*. He does not merely foresee what will happen; He decrees it (Isa 46:10; Eph 1:11; Dan 4:35). Yet this decree does not coerce creatures against their nature. Instead, God ordains that they act *according to* their nature, ensuring that their desires align with His purposes. The result: creatures do what they want, and God accomplishes what He wills. Both are true simultaneously.

This framework is essential for understanding salvation. If God's sovereignty extends to the free choices of Joseph's brothers, Pharaoh, and even those who crucified Christ, then it certainly extends to the sinner's response to the gospel. Effectual grace does not violate the will—it *changes* the will, so that the sinner freely and gladly comes to Christ because God has made him willing (Ps 110:3; Ezek 36:26-27; Phil 2:13). The call goes out universally; the Spirit applies it effectually to the elect.

Objection: "This makes God the author of sin."

Response: Authorship implies moral responsibility and approval. God ordains that sin occur, but He is not the *moral* author of it. The distinction is this: God decrees that creatures commit sin *according to their own evil desires* (James 1:13-15), and He does so for wise and holy purposes (Gen 50:20; Acts 2:23; Rom 8:28). The creature sins because he *wants* to; God ordains it because it serves His ultimate glory. The creature is judged for his evil intent; God is glorified for His sovereign wisdom.

As Augustine said: "God judged it better to bring good out of evil than to permit no evil to exist" (*Enchiridion*, 27). The same principle holds in salvation: God brings maximum glory to Himself by saving some while justly passing over others—all according to His sovereign will (Rom 9:22-23).

Against the Corporate Reinterpretation of “All”

Abasciano's corporate-election scheme collapses the moment Scripture's universal language meets its unavoidable demand for personal response. The New Testament repeatedly pairs the word $\pi\alpha\nu$ (“all”) with a singular addressee: John 3:16 speaks of “whoever believes,” 1 Timothy 2:6 says Christ “gave Himself as a ransom for all people,” and Acts 17:30 commands “all men everywhere to repent.” Even the opening proclamation of the gospel, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15), is addressed to each hearer, not to an abstract collective. In every instance the invitation is personal; the grace offered is directed to every individual, not to a faceless bloc.

That invitation carries an equally personal accountability, a fact the gospel narrative makes unmistakable through its parables. The prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) dramatizes a father's love toward a single wayward child; the lost sheep (Matt 18:12-14) depicts a shepherd leaving ninety-nine to seek one; the unforgiving servant (Matt 18:21-35) measures forgiveness against a single debtor's attitude; and the vineyard workers (Matt 20:1-16) reward each labourer according to his own response. Each story treats the recipient as a distinct person whose fate is decided by his own heart, not by membership in a corporate class. The gospel's own call—“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31)—again places the decision squarely on the individual.

The gospel's broader structure reinforces that salvation rests on an effectual divine draw rather than on a mere corporate label. God is presented as holy, just, and sovereign (Ex 34:6-7; Isa 6:1-5; Rom 11:36); humanity is depicted as dead and morally incapable (Rom 3:10-18; Eph 2:1-3). Christ's atonement is penal, substitutionary, and wrath-bearing (Isa 53:4-6; Rom 3:25-26; 2 Cor 5:21). The call to repentance and belief is accompanied by the promise of a new birth as the necessary, effectual cause of a saving response (John 3:3-8; Titus 3:5). Throughout the gospel we read that “all that the Father gives me will come to me” (John 6:37) and that “no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him” (John 6:44, 65). The willingness to believe is itself a gift; the “whoever will” of John 3:16 presupposes a divine granting of desire.

When prevenient grace is portrayed as non-efficacious, the individual lacks the capacity to obey the command to repent, yet Scripture consistently teaches that God does not punish a person for what he is unable to do (Deut 30:19-20; John 6:44). Holding someone eternally accountable for failing to perform a spiritually impossible act is precisely the moral entrapment the Entrapment Problem identifies. Only a grace that is effectual—personal, powerfully drawn—preserves both divine justice and the gospel's claim that salvation is “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom 1:16).

The corporate-election façade therefore cannot reconcile the biblical twin truths that the gospel is proclaimed to every person and that God supplies the ability to respond. If grace remains merely an offer, the gospel's engine is reduced to a hollow invitation; if grace is effectual, the invitation becomes the power that actually brings about repentance and faith. The former collapses under Scripture's relentless personalism; the latter sustains the doctrine of salvation as the power of God, not the possibility of man.

In sum, the New Testament's universal language, its repeated calls to individual repentance (Mark 1:15; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor 5:20), its vivid parabolic illustrations of personal judgment, and its consistent teaching that God alone grants the capacity to believe together render the corporate-election

construct untenable. The Entrapment Problem is resolved only by affirming that prevenient grace is effectual for the elect, preserving both divine justice and the very power of the gospel.

Tetelestai: Accomplishment vs. Possibility - The Arminian Redefinition

For the Arminian model of universal atonement to hold, τετέλεσται cannot mean "paid in full."

- If Christ's death was a full payment for the sins of every individual, and yet many of those individuals will still be punished for their sins in hell, then God exacts payment twice.
- Therefore, the Arminian system is forced to reinterpret Christ's cry. "It is finished" can no longer mean that salvation was *accomplished*. It must be demoted to mean that the *provision* for salvation was made.

In that view, τετέλεσται means:

- "The way is now open."
- "Salvation has been made possible for all."
- "The ransom has been provided, but it awaits activation by human free will."

This transforms the cross from a victorious altar where sin was decisively cancelled into a mere repository of potential grace. It turns the triumphant cry of a conquering King into a press release announcing a new spiritual commodity that is now available, pending the consumer's choice.

Primary Potential Objections:

1) Objection – “Τετέλεσται just means the provision is made; Christ declared the *way* open, not that every sinner is actually saved.”

Rebuttal: That reads the lexical force out of the text to preserve a system rather than follow Scripture. John 19:30 uses τετέλεσται as legal and consummative language: the work is completed. More importantly, the gospel pictures atonement not as mere possibility but as effectual where applied. John 6:37, 44, 65; Acts 16:14; Eph 2:5 teach that coming, opening, and life are divine grants. If the cross only “made possible,” then John’s theology—“all whom the Father gives come” and “no one comes unless the Father draws”—is false or irrelevant. Either the atonement secures what it intends or God is judged unjust for delivering impotent provision.

2) Objection – “Finished = end of suffering or fulfilment of role, not legal payment. It’s a theological cry of completion, not forensic satisfaction.”

Rebuttal: Theologies that separate penal substitution from the forensic language of satisfaction force a Christianity that neutralizes penalty, guilt, and righteousness. Isaiah 53, Romans 3:25–26, and 2 Corinthians 5:21 anchor the atonement as substitutionary and penal. If penalty remains despite a finished payment, the legal logic collapses: either penalty was transferred and removed, or God punishes twice. Tetelestai in court-language ends the case. Treating it as mere “fulfilment” evacuates Christ’s victory and hands Arminians the moral paradox you expose.

3) Objection – “Atonement is sufficient for all but efficient only for believers. That preserves universal provision and particular application.”

Rebuttal: “Sufficient but not efficient” is a semantic lifeboat that fails exegetically when Scripture couples provision with divine application. John 17:2; John 6:37; Romans 8:32 and Acts 13:48 show giving and granting lead to life and belief. The Bible does not present a two-tiered atonement where payment is complete but relevance optional. The moral ought→can principle undercuts this: to command repentance while withholding the effectual power to repent is unjust (Eph 2:1; 1 Cor 2:14). Sufficient-for-all but applied-to-some is an ad hoc fix that still leaves culpability squarely on God’s choice of worlds.

4) Objection – “Middle knowledge/Molinism rescues Arminian intuitions: God actualized a world where libertarian agents freely reject although prevenient grace was available.”

Rebuttal: Molinism relocates the problem to the divine will. If God actualizes a world foreseeing many will receive only an impotent enabling and end up punished, He is the author of the moral architecture that produces that result. Isaiah 46:10 and Romans 9 (esp. Rom 9:16) show God decrees ends; He is not a bystander constrained by creaturely counterfactuals. Molinism subtly dethrones biblical sovereignty by making God hostage to hypothetical libertarian outcomes. That is not mercy, it is managerial cruelty.

5) Objection – “The New Testament’s ‘all’ language means ‘all kinds’ or corporate scope, not every individual.”

Rebuttal: Context matters. Yes, sometimes $\pi\alpha\varsigma$ functions corporately. But you cannot read every *panta verse* as corporate escape hatch. John 3:16, 1 Tim 2:6, Titus 2:11, Acts 17:30 sit in personal address contexts where the invitation and accountability are individual. The gospel’s parables dramatize personal fate decided by personal response (Luke 15; Matt 20). The corporate gloss does not neutralize the individual ought nor the biblical teaching that the willingness to believe is itself a gift (John 6; Ezekiel 36:26–27; 1 John 4:19).

6) Objection – “Holding people accountable while their will is incapacitated violates justice; but prevenient grace restores ability, so punishment is fair.”

Rebuttal: The key dispute is whether prevenient grace *restores* ability or only *offers* a theoretical opportunity. Scripture repeatedly depicts the unregenerate as dead and unable (Eph 2:1; Rom 8:7–8; 1 Cor 2:14). The texts that ascribe coming and belief to divine giving (John 6; Acts 16:14; John 17:9–11) argue that what enables repentance is not an abstract offer but a sovereign work. If prevenient grace is impotent without God’s giving, then condemning on the basis of mere offers is unjust in the sense of ought→can. Only effectual grace removes the moral contradiction.

7) Objection: “But the Bible says God regrets, desires, or is grieved—so His will must be contingent and His grace resistible.”

Rebuttal: This objection commits a fundamental hermeneutical error: it builds a doctrine of God’s **ontology** from metaphorical, relational language (anthropomorphism) while ignoring—and ultimately contradicting—His direct, propositional self-revelation. It relies on a **fallacy of equivocation**, treating

God's revealed moral standard (what He commands) as if it were the same as His sovereign, eternal decree (what He ordains).

Scripture itself provides the key to interpreting Scripture. The non-negotiable foundation is God's **immutability**.

- **Numbers 23:19:** "God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind."
- **Malachi 3:6:** "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed."
- **James 1:17:** "...the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change."

These are clear, ontological statements. Any anthropomorphic language must be interpreted in light of this revealed truth, not in opposition to it. The Bible models this for us explicitly:

- **The 1 Samuel 15 Case Study:** In the same chapter, the text says God "regretted that he had made Saul king" (v. 11) and then declares, "The Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret" (v. 29). The text itself forces a distinction between a description of God's relational displeasure with Saul's sin in time and a statement about His unchanging, eternal essence. To ignore verse 29 in favour of verse 11 is not exegesis; it is selective citation to create a mutable god.

This distinction is theologically categorized as God's two wills—not because God is divided, but because He relates to creation on two distinct planes:

1. **The Will of Decree (Decretive Will):** This is God's secret, sovereign, and effectual will by which He ordains all that comes to pass. This will is irresistible and **always accomplished**.
 - **Isaiah 46:10:** "My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose."
 - **Daniel 4:35:** "He does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand."
2. **The Will of Precept (Preceptive Will):** This is God's revealed moral law and commands. It reveals what is pleasing to Him and what He requires of His creatures. This will is **regularly resisted** by sinful man.
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:3:** "For this is the will of God, your sanctification..."
 - **1 Peter 2:15:** "For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people."

Confusing these two is the source of the error. God's "desire" that all repent (His preceptive will) reveals His moral standard and the genuine basis for the universal gospel call. His ordaining that only the elect *do* repent (His decretive will) reveals His sovereign purpose in salvation.

This distinction does not make God duplicitous. Rather, it reveals the fullness of His character. His **preceptive will** reveals His holiness and our duty. His **decretive will** reveals His sovereignty and our absolute dependence. To appeal to God's anthropomorphic "feelings" to overturn His sovereign decree

is to build a theology on poetry while demolishing the clear prose. It is a method fundamentally hostile to the plain sense of Scripture.

8) Objection: “The tension between God’s sovereign grace and human responsibility is a divine mystery or paradox that is beyond reason.”

Rebuttal: This objection misuses ‘mystery’ as a shield for logical incoherence. Biblical mystery is not a synonym for contradiction; it is a previously hidden truth that God has now graciously revealed. Paul defines ‘mystery’ as the gospel itself—Christ in the Gentiles, the union of Jew and Gentile in one body—which was once concealed but is now made known to the saints (Eph. 3:3–6; Col. 1:26–27). Nowhere does Scripture demand belief in two mutually exclusive propositions (e.g., that God’s grace is both effectual and resistible in the same sense). A system that logically collapses into the moral absurdity of the Entrapment Problem is not a ‘mystery’; it is a falsehood. To call it a mystery is to accuse God of being irrational. True Christian mystery inspires worship at God’s revealed wisdom; it is not a theological escape hatch for systems that cannot withstand biblical scrutiny.

9) Objection: “For love to be genuine, it must be freely chosen, which requires the libertarian freedom to reject it. Therefore, God must preserve this freedom.”

Rebuttal: This objection imposes a philosophical, sentimental definition of love onto Scripture that the text itself refutes. The Bible presents love for God not as an autonomous human achievement but as the **fruit** of God’s prior, effectual work. We love because **He first loved us** (1 John 4:19), and this love is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). Furthermore, this objection leads to a logically absurd conclusion: heaven, a state where glorified saints are no longer able to sin or reject God, would become a place where genuine love is impossible. The biblical reality is the opposite: perfected love is not the freedom to rebel, but the glorious inability to do so.

10) Objection: “If Christ did not die for every single person, then the universal gospel call to ‘whosoever will’ cannot be sincere.”

Rebuttal: This objection incorrectly equates the sincerity of God’s **command** with the scope of His **decree**. The gospel call is a universal summons issued under God’s revealed, preceptive will, and it is entirely sincere in what it commands: that all who hear should repent and believe. However, the efficacy of that call is determined by God’s decretive will, by which He has chosen a people for Himself (“Many are called, but few are chosen,” Matt. 22:14). God’s sincerity is in His authoritative command, not in providing an equal ability to respond. The call goes out to all, exposing the hardness of the reprobate who refuse it (Prov. 1:24–26) and effectually gathering the elect for whom Christ’s atonement was definite and accomplished.

11) Objection: “The early church fathers and the historical consensus of the church did not affirm double predestination; therefore, it is an aberration.”

Rebuttal: This appeal to tradition is historically selective and theologically misguided. While the categories were refined during the Reformation, the core principles of monergistic salvation were affirmed definitively at the

Council of Orange (529 A.D.), which anathematized any notion that the beginning of faith (*initium fidei*) originates in man. This condemnation of Semi-Pelagianism strikes at the very heart of the

Arminian system, which is little more than Semi-Pelagianism with a new gloss. Scripture, not church tradition, is the sole infallible rule of faith (

Sola Scriptura). Where tradition aligns with Scripture (as at Orange), it is a helpful witness; where it deviates, it must be rejected.

12) Objection: “A God who sovereignly elects some to salvation and passes over others, leaving them to their just condemnation, is cruel, arbitrary, and monstrous.”

Rebuttal: This objection is not a theological argument but an emotional one, rooted in placing human sentiment as the judge over divine revelation. It is the very protest the Apostle Paul anticipated and silenced: “But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, ‘Why have you made me like this?’” (Rom. 9:20). The creature has no moral or legal standing to bring a charge against the Creator (Job 40:2). Scripture’s response is not to soften God’s sovereignty to make it more palatable, but to declare that His ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts (Isa. 55:8–9). What offends fallen human intuition often serves to magnify God’s absolute holiness, justice, and inscrutable wisdom.

13) Objection: “Texts like John 1:12 state that to those ‘who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,’ proving that belief must precede the new birth.”

Rebuttal: This is a classic case of proof-texting by ignoring the immediate context. The objector stops reading one verse too soon. John immediately clarifies the **source and cause** of this new birth in the very next sentence: “...who were born, **not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God**” (John 1:13). John first describes the evidence of the new birth (receiving Christ, believing in His name) and then immediately explains its monergistic cause (the will of God alone). The sequence is descriptive, then causal. Verse 13 functions as an inspired commentary on verse 12, explicitly ruling out the human will as the originating cause of salvation.

14) Objection: “Double-payment is avoided because unbelief is the only unforgiven sin.”

Rebuttal: Unbelief is a sin among sins (John 16:9). If Christ bore **all** the sins of those He died for, unbelief is either paid or it isn’t. If it isn’t, the atonement is incomplete. If it is, punishing it again is double payment. Scripture treats the debt as fully canceled for the beneficiaries of the cross (Col. 2:13–14; Rom. 8:32–34). The dodge fails.

15) Objection: “God elects on the basis of foreseen faith.”

Rebuttal: Election is causative, not reactive. “Foreknow” in Rom. 8:29 is covenantal fore-love, not foresight of acts. The same persons foreknown are predestined, called, justified, and glorified with no leakage (Rom. 8:29–30). God’s choice is not grounded in human decision (Rom. 9:11–16; Acts 13:48; 1 Pet. 1:2 with Matt. 7:23).

16) Objection: “1 John 2:2 says Christ is the propitiation for the whole world, so definite atonement is false.”

Rebuttal: “World” in Johannine usage signals scope beyond Jews to all nations, not every individual

without exception (John 11:51–52; 1 John 4:14). Propitiation actually removes wrath. If wrath is propitiated for every person, hell is empty. John writes to a particular flock (“our sins”) and expands the **horizon** of redemption, not its **efficacy**. Scope widens, effect remains definite.

17) Objection: “2 Peter 2:1 says false teachers were ‘bought’ by the Master, so Christ died for them savingly.”

Rebuttal: Peter alludes to Deut. 32. “Bought” can denote covenantal claim or external deliverance language, not accomplished propitiation for those who perish. The term “despotēs” emphasizes ownership. If “bought” here meant saving purchase, their destruction would contradict the very nature of redemption. Compare covenant “purchase” of Israel who nevertheless perished in unbelief.

18) Objection: “Acts 7:51 shows the Spirit is resistible, therefore grace is resistible.”

Rebuttal: People resist the **external call** and common operations of the Spirit. Scripture never says the **effectual call** can be thwarted. Israel resisted the prophets and the outward ministry of the Spirit. God’s inward grant secures response for the elect (John 6:37, 44–45, 65; Acts 16:14; Rom. 8:30). Resistance explains the reprobate. Effectual grace explains conversion.

19) Objection: “Ezekiel 33:11 and 18:23 show God does not desire the death of the wicked, so He wills all to be saved.”

Rebuttal: These are covenant exhortations expressing God’s **preceptive** will to Israel, not denials of His decree. They ground the sincerity of warning and call, not universalism. Harmonize with Isa. 46:10 and Dan. 4:35. The two-wills distinction you already established carries the weight here.

20) Objection: “Ephesians 1:13 puts faith before regeneration. ‘Having believed, you were sealed...’ so faith precedes new birth.”

Rebuttal: Sealing follows faith. That is not the same as regeneration’s timing. New birth causes faith (John 1:13; 3:3–8; Eph. 2:5). Paul’s sequence in Eph. 1:13 is hearing, believing, then sealing, which is the Spirit’s assurance ministry, not the creation of life. No conflict.

21) Objection: “Hebrews 6 and 10 teach real apostasy of the regenerate, so grace is resistible.”

Rebuttal: The subjects taste, share, and partake **phenomenologically** in covenant privileges without union to Christ. The field that drinks rain yet bears thorns is near to being cursed, not formerly justified then lost. Hebrews interprets Hebrews: “We are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls” (Heb. 10:39). John’s verdict stands: they went out because they were not of us (1 John 2:19).

22) Objection: "This is just an in-house debate over a secondary doctrine. It doesn't affect the core of the gospel."

Rebuttal: This objection mistakenly categorizes the sovereign work of God as a negotiable ‘mechanic’ of salvation, rather than a direct reflection of His divine character. The work of salvation is irreducibly Trinitarian. Synergism does not merely propose a different process; it proposes a different God. It presents a Father whose electing will is contingent on the creature, and a Holy Spirit whose regenerative power is resistible and frequently defeated. This is a profound distortion of two persons of

the Godhead, reducing them to something less than the sovereign YHWH of Scripture. An error that misrepresents the character and power of the Father and the Holy Spirit is, by definition, a primary, gospel-level error.

To call this a secondary debate is to treat God's sovereignty as negotiable, the Holy Spirit as fallible, and the Father's will as optional.

Is It Another Gospel?

The question must be pressed: if a theological system functionally redesigns the Trinity and the mechanics of salvation such that the Father's will is contingent, the Son's work is hypothetical, and the Spirit's power is resistible—is that not another gospel? The instinct toward charity is commendable, but it must not eclipse the biblical standard for what constitutes gospel fidelity. Paul's criterion in Galatians is unambiguous and unsparing.

Paul's Standard: The Mechanism of Salvation Is Non-Negotiable

In Galatians 1:6-9, Paul does not engage in dialogue with the Judaizers. He does not commend their sincerity or acknowledge their love for God. He pronounces anathema: "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed."

What was the Judaizers' error? They added human works to grace. They said, "Yes, Christ—but also circumcision. Yes, faith—but also law-keeping." Paul's verdict was not, "This is a helpful secondary perspective" or "Let us charitably accommodate this view." His verdict was categorical: this is a different gospel. Why? Because it changes the mechanism by which salvation is secured. The gospel ceased to be monergistic and became synergistic. Grace was no longer sufficient; it became merely necessary. And that, according to Paul, was not a variation—it was a distortion worthy of divine curse.

Now apply that standard rigorously to classical Arminianism. Arminianism says: Yes, grace—but also human cooperation. Yes, Christ died—but His work only becomes effective when you choose to activate it. Yes, the Spirit works—but you can resist Him. The structural parallel to the Judaizers is exact. Both systems make the creature's action the decisive factor. Both make grace necessary but not sufficient. Both are synergistic in a way that Paul explicitly and repeatedly condemns (cf. Rom. 9:16, "So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy"). If adding works to grace constitutes "another gospel," how is adding autonomous libertarian choice to grace not equally another gospel?

Another Jesus, Another Spirit, Another Gospel

The common objection runs as follows: "But Arminians trust in Christ, and the object of faith matters more than precision in soteriology." This objection is superficially pastoral but exegetically insufficient. You cannot neatly separate the object of faith from the content of what you believe about that object. If you say, "I trust in Jesus," but your Jesus is a created being (Arianism), or merely a good moral teacher (liberalism), or a saviour who tries but does not secure salvation (Arminianism)—then you do not trust in the Jesus of Scripture. You trust in a different Jesus.

Paul makes this explicit in 2 Corinthians 11:4: "For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough." Another Jesus. A different gospel. The question, then, is unavoidable: Does Arminianism present "another Jesus"?

If the Jesus of Arminianism dies to make salvation possible but not certain, offers redemption but does not accomplish it for anyone in particular, and tries to save but is ultimately thwarted by human will—then yes, that is another Jesus. That is not the Christ who declares, "All that the Father gives me will come to me" (John 6:37), nor the one who "gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession" (Titus 2:14). The Arminian Jesus is a hypothetical saviour. The biblical Jesus is an actual Savior. These are not the same.

The Incoherence of Selective Trinitarianism

Here we encounter a theological absurdity so glaring it borders on the farcical: the claim that one can confess orthodox Christology while simultaneously gutting the doctrine of the Father and the Spirit. This is not a minor inconsistency—it is a categorical impossibility that betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of the doctrine of the Trinity itself.

The doctrine of the Trinity is not merely that there are three persons who happen to be divine. It is that these three persons share one undivided divine essence, one will, one power, one purpose. The economic Trinity (how God relates to creation) reflects the ontological Trinity (who God is in Himself). The three persons are distinguished by their relations, not by possessing different attributes or exercising contradictory wills. What is true of God's nature is true of all three persons equally and necessarily.

Therefore, if the Father's will can be thwarted by creaturely choice, then either:

1. The Son's will can also be thwarted (destroying any coherent Christology), or
2. The Son and Father have different wills regarding salvation (destroying Trinitarian monotheism and introducing tri-theism).

If the Spirit's regenerating work can be resisted and rendered ineffective, then either:

1. The Son's saving work can also fail to accomplish its purpose, or
2. The Spirit is weaker than the Son, possessing less power and authority (destroying the equality of persons within the Godhead).

The Arminian must choose: either all three persons are equally sovereign and effectual in their saving work, or none of them are. There is no coherent middle position. You cannot have an omnipotent, sovereignty-securing Son alongside a Father whose will is contingent on creatures and a Spirit whose power is regularly defeated. That is not the Trinity—that is three different gods with three different power levels trying to coordinate a joint venture.

This is why the Trinitarian argument is not merely a rhetorical escalation but a logical necessity. If Arminianism is correct about the Father (His will is resistible) and the Spirit (His work is defeatable), then by the doctrine of divine simplicity and the inseparable operations of the Trinity (*opera Trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt*), the same must be true of the Son. His atonement must also be resistible, His

intercession potentially ineffective, His promises uncertain. The Jesus who says "All that the Father gives me will come to me" (John 6:37) and "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18) becomes incoherent—these are not the words of a saviour whose purposes can be thwarted.

Conversely, if the Arminian wants to maintain that Jesus actually saves—that His work on the cross genuinely secures redemption for those who believe, that His intercession is effectual (Heb. 7:25), that His promises are certain—then they have already conceded the monergistic point. Because if the Son's will to save cannot be defeated, and the Son and Father are one (John 10:30), then the Father's will to save cannot be defeated either. And if the Father and Son send the Spirit to apply redemption (John 14:26; 16:7), and that work cannot fail for the Son, then it cannot fail for the Spirit either.

The attempt to have an "orthodox Jesus" while redesigning the Father and Spirit is theological double-think. It assumes you can amputate two-thirds of the Godhead, edit their attributes and operations at will, and somehow leave the remaining third untouched. But the persons of the Trinity do not operate independently—they share one divine will, one divine power, one divine purpose. To say the Father tries but fails, or the Spirit woos but is resisted, while maintaining that the Son secures and accomplishes, is not nuance. It is incoherence.

You do not get to keep Jesus while editing God. They are the same being. The result is not trinitarian, but tritheism.

“The Judaizers Were Sincere Too”

The comparison to the Judaizers is not merely illustrative—it is diagnostic. The Judaizers were not atheists. They were not pagans. They believed in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They revered the law given at Sinai. They awaited the Messiah. They considered themselves the covenant people of God. They were deeply religious, deeply sincere, and deeply wrong.

Why? Because they added human contribution to divine grace. They made salvation synergistic instead of monergistic. And Paul did not respond with nuance or pastoral accommodation. He said they were accursed (Gal. 1:8-9) and that those who followed their teaching were severed from Christ (Gal. 5:4). Why the severity? Because the gospel is not negotiable. You do not get to tweak the mechanism of salvation and still call it the same message.

Arminianism does precisely what the Judaizers did—it makes salvation ultimately dependent on human contribution. In the case of the Judaizers, the contribution was works. In the case of Arminianism, the contribution is the libertarian choice to believe. The formula is structurally identical: Judaizers preached "Christ + your works"; Arminians preach "Christ + your choice." Both systems locate the decisive factor in the creature. Both make grace necessary but not sufficient. Both are, therefore, synergistic in a way that Paul explicitly condemns.

"But They Trust in Christ!"

Many Arminians do trust in Christ—but they trust in Him inconsistently with their theology. In practice, when an Arminian is on their knees, broken by sin, crying out for mercy, they are not thinking, "I sure hope I make the right choice." They are thinking, "Lord, save me!" That is monergism. That is dependence on God's grace alone. But their theology, when pressed, says: "God has done His part. Now you must do yours."

So the question becomes: Are they saved by their practice (trusting Christ alone) or by their theology (Christ + choice)? The answer must be that many are saved despite their theology, not because of it. God is gracious to the confused and meets sinners where they are. But grace does not sanctify error, and mercy does not baptize falsehood. The critical distinction is not merely whether one holds incorrect doctrine, but whether one is correctable when confronted with Scripture.

The Dividing Line: Posture Toward Correction

Here the distinction becomes razor-sharp. You do not get to break the first, second, and third commandments—fashioning a different God, bearing false witness about His nature, and taking His name in vain by attaching it to a distorted gospel—and then claim immunity from correction on the grounds of sincerity. The issue is not whether someone can be saved while holding confused or immature theology. The issue is whether they are willing to be corrected by the Word when that theology is exposed as false.

Scripture consistently presents repentance not merely as sorrow over discrete sins, but as a posture of submission to God's authority, including His revelation of Himself. When the prophets confronted Israel for idolatry, the sin was not merely wrong worship—it was worshiping a false conception of Yahweh (cf. Exod. 32; Jer. 7:8-10; Ezek. 8). The people were "sincere," but sincerity does not sanctify idolatry. God demanded they repent—turn from the false image and return to Him as He had revealed Himself.

The same principle applies here. If an Arminian is confronted with the scriptural testimony that salvation depends not on human will but on God who has mercy (Rom. 9:16), that the Father's will cannot be thwarted (Eph. 1:11), that the Son secures—not merely offers—redemption (Titus 2:14), and that the Spirit effectually regenerates whom He will (John 3:8; Acts 16:14)—then the question is: Will they submit to correction, or will they cling to the system?

If they respond with humility, acknowledge the tension, and begin to reshape their theology in submission to the text, then their prior confusion is covered by grace, much as God was patient with the disciples' dense misunderstandings during Christ's earthly ministry. But if they are shown the scriptural case and harden against it, insisting that their system must stand even when it contradicts the plain teaching of Scripture, then they reveal something far more serious than doctrinal confusion. They reveal a heart that refuses correction—a heart that has made an idol of the system and will not bend the knee to the Word. And that is not a person walking in saving faith. That is a person walking in rebellion, no matter how theologically sophisticated the rebellion appears (cf. 1 Sam. 15:23, "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry").

Conclusion: Arminianism as System vs. Arminians as Individuals

We must maintain surgical precision here. Arminianism as a system is another gospel. It distorts the nature of God, the work of Christ, and the mechanics of salvation. Individual Arminians, however, may be saved—not because their theology is acceptable, but because God is merciful to those who trust in Christ even through the fog of confusion, provided they remain teachable. Their faith rests in the right object, even when their doctrine is inconsistent. This is not a cop-out. It is a recognition that God saves messy, confused sinners who trust in Jesus, even when their theology is a train wreck. Justification is by faith in Christ, not by precision in systematic theology.

But—and this is the critical qualification—such salvation presupposes a heart willing to be corrected. You cannot fashion a golden calf, call it Yahweh, worship it with zeal, and then claim faithfulness

when confronted. You cannot distort the Trinity, present another Jesus, preach another gospel, and then dismiss correction as "just a secondary issue." The tolerance God extends to the immature and confused is not extended to the obstinate and unteachable. If Arminian theology is exposed as contradicting Scripture, and the response is to defend the system rather than submit to the text, then the problem is no longer one of confused doctrine—it is one of unrepentant idolatry.

That does not mean the system is safe even for those who are correctable. It means only that God is merciful to people caught in it who remain humble before His Word. The analogy is apt: a man might survive drinking poisoned water because his immune system fights it off. That does not mean the water was not poisoned. It means only that he did not die. Arminianism is poisoned water. Some survive it because they do not drink deeply—they trust Christ more than the system, and when confronted with truth, they yield. But the system itself is toxic, and those who refuse the antidote when it is offered cannot claim they were merely confused. They become culpable.

A system that functionally redesigns the Trinity and salvation is, definitionally, another gospel. The Judaizers redesigned the gospel by adding works. The Arminians redesign the gospel by making grace resistible and human will decisive. Paul would have anathematized both. This indictment is not too harsh. If anything, the modern church has been too soft, because we have conflated criticizing a theological system (which Scripture demands) with judging individual hearts (which only God can do).

We can say, "Arminianism is another gospel" as a systematic judgment, while also saying, "Some Arminians may be saved by trusting Christ and remaining correctable" as a pastoral recognition of God's mercy to the humble. But we cannot say, "Arminianism is just another valid perspective." It is not. And if we care about truth, we have to say so. The gospel is not a buffet. You do not get to redesign God, refuse correction, and still call it orthodoxy. The heart posture toward Scripture when confronted is the right dividing line between salvific confusion and damning rebellion.

Proof set

Let it be stated clearly: this analysis does not rest on a few select passages, such as Romans 9, John 6, or Ephesians 1, as is often caricatured. Instead, it is built upon the coherent and cumulative witness of the entire canon. The extensive proof set that follows demonstrates that the grammar of salvation—divine initiative, effectual calling, and sovereign regeneration—is a consistent theme from the Law and Prophets to the Gospels and Epistles. The central argument is that the Bible, taken as a whole, uniformly teaches that God's life-giving act must precede the sinner's faith. Opposing views are forced not merely to reinterpret a few verses, but to systematically flatten or reverse this pervasive biblical pattern.

1. Effectual grace, not bare enabling

- John 6:37: "All that the Father gives me will come to me." Gift precedes and secures coming.
- John 6:44: "No one can come unless the Father draws him." ἐλκύση signals efficacious pull, not mere offer.
- John 6:65: "No one can come unless it has been granted by the Father." δεδομένον locates ability in a grant.

- Acts 16:14: “The Lord opened her heart to pay attention.” διήνοιξεν shows divine causality of response.
 - Eph 2:5: “When we were dead... God made us alive with Christ.” συζωοποιέω grounds faith’s cause in God.
2. Election is personal in Christ, and the chain is unbroken
 - Eph 1:4: “He chose us in him.” The “us” are real persons, the saints at Ephesus, not an abstract set.
 - Rom 8:29–30: Foreknown → predestined → called → justified → glorified. The same group moves through every link. No leakage.
 - Acts 13:48: “As many as were appointed to eternal life believed.” τάσσω places the decisive cause in God.
 3. The decisive cause is mercy, not human will
 - Rom 9:16: “It depends not on the one willing or running, but on God who shows mercy.” οὐκ... ἀλλὰ is categorical.
 4. Romans 9 is soteriological and personal, not mere corporate roles
 - Rom 9:15–18: “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy... He has mercy on whom he wills and hardens whom he wills.” Personal pronouns, salvific categories.
 - Rom 9:23–24: “Vessels of mercy... prepared for glory... the called from Jews and Gentiles.” Salvation focus.
 - Rom 11:7: “The elect obtained it, the rest were hardened.” Individual outcomes, not only corporate badges.
 5. Meticulous sovereignty is biblical love’s context, not its denial
 - Eph 1:11: God “works all things according to the counsel of his will.”
 - Acts 2:23: Jesus delivered up by God’s “definite plan and foreknowledge,” yet “you crucified.” Dual agency, one decree.
 - Gen 50:20: “You meant evil... God meant it for good.” Same act, distinct intentions, sovereign purpose.
 - Rom 9:18: Mercy and hardening are God’s to give.

- Isaiah 46:10 – “*Declaring the end from the beginning...*”
- **Ezekiel 36:26–27 – God Alone Transforms the Heart:** “*I will give you a new heart... I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes...*”. God says “Make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!” (Ezek. 18:31), except they can’t – they’re blaming generational sin. Ezekiel 18:2–4. Ezekiel 18:30–32: The call to “make” a new heart is law, not gospel. It reveals their inability, not ability. Resolution? → Only Ezekiel 36 fulfills what Ezekiel 18 commands.
- John 1:13 – “...not of the will of man, but of God.”
- 1 John 4:19 – “We love because He first loved us.”

6. Universal provision does not equal universal application

- John 6:37: The given ones come. Application is bounded by giving.
- John 17:2, 9: Authority “to give eternal life to all whom you have given” and “I am not praying for the world but for those you have given me.”
- Rom 8:32: Those for whom the Son is given are the ones to whom God “graciously gives all things,” which includes justification and glorification in 8:30.
- John 10:26–27: “You do not believe because you are not of my sheep... My sheep hear my voice.” Identity precedes response.

7. Total inability as Scripture states it

- Rom 8:7–8: The mind of the flesh “does not submit” and “cannot.” Those in the flesh “cannot please God.”
- 1 Cor 2:14: The natural person “does not accept” and “cannot understand” the things of the Spirit.

8. God Ordains All – Even Evil and Opposition This isn't permission, it's sovereign ordination.

- Isaiah 45:7 – “I form light and create darkness... I make peace and create calamity.”
- Amos 3:6 – “If disaster comes to a city, has not the Lord done it?”
- Lamentations 3:37–38 – “Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it?”
- 1 Samuel 2:6 – “The LORD kills and brings to life...”
- Daniel 2:21 – “He removes kings and sets up kings...”
- Psalm 115:3 – “Our God is in the heavens; He does all that He pleases.”
- Acts 2:23 – Jesus was delivered up by the definite plan of God.

- 1 Kings 22 – A lying spirit sent by God to deceive Ahab. Ahab's death ordained, willing deceitful spirit, Ahab's choice still and responsibility.
- Exodus (Pharaoh) – Repeatedly hardened by God, and himself.
- Luke 22:31–32 – Satan asks to sift Peter; Christ sovereignly allows it.
- Isaiah 53:10 – “It was the will of the LORD to crush Him.”
- Job 1–2 – Satan needs permission. The contrast: Job 38–42 = God is not on trial.
- 2 Cor. 12:7 – Paul's thorn: a messenger of Satan used for sanctification. God declares his mercy is enough when Paul asks for it to be removed.
- Romans 1:20–28 – God hands them over in judgment.
- Proverbs 16:9 – “The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.”
- Philippians 2:12–13 – “Work out your salvation... for it is God who works in you.”

9. Arminian Panta Blunders and John 3:16 (*Universal ≠ Individual*)

These verses are not soteriological universals. They describe **scope**, not **effect**.

- **1 Tim. 2:6** – “Who gave Himself a ransom for all...” → See vv.1–2. All = *kinds*, not every person.
- **Titus 2:11** – “Bringing salvation to all...” → Same pattern. Context = types/classes, not everyone indiscriminately.
- **1 Peter 3:9** – “The Lord... is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” The “you” = the elect, not humanity at large. The “any” and “all” refer back to “you” (the beloved, v.8), not every human ever. If God “wants” all saved and still fails, then His will is impotent.
- **John 3:16** – The Most Abused Verse in Arminianism. “God so loved the world...” - “World” (κόσμος) = people groups, not every individual. It's Jew + Gentile, not universalism. The verse assumes perishing unless belief happens. It doesn't say “God gave His Son so everyone could maybe choose.” It says those who believe will not perish – present participle (ὁ πιστεύων) – the believing ones. John 3:16 is descriptive, not an invitation. It describes the effect of God's love. The “giving” of the Son in John 3:16 = the atonement itself (cf. John 10:11, 15) – which is particular, not general.

Net: These texts together establish that grace in salvation is effectual and decisive, election is personal-in-Christ and issues in calling and faith, Romans 9 speaks to persons in salvation terms, and the decisive difference is God's mercy, not human will.

10. Old Testament Witness: God Alone Saves and Reigns

- **Isaiah 43:11** – “I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior.” Salvation is Yahweh's exclusive act, not a cooperative venture.
- **Isaiah 45:22** – “Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.” The universal call is anchored in God's sole prerogative to save.

- **Isaiah 55:11** – “So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.” God’s word is effectual, not hypothetical.
- **Isaiah 14:27** – “For the LORD of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?” Sovereign decree cannot be thwarted.
- **Isaiah 25:9** – “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.” Salvation is ascribed to God alone, not to human will.
- **Isaiah 48:11** – “For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it... My glory I will not give to another.” God saves for the preservation of His own glory, not to magnify man.
- **Jonah 2:9** – “Salvation belongs to the LORD!” The prophet’s confession underlines the exclusivity of divine initiative in rescuing sinners.
- **Psalms 3:8** – “Salvation belongs to the LORD; your blessing be on your people!” Same refrain: salvation originates in God, not man.
- **Psalms 62:1** – “For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.” Salvation is sourced in God alone.
- **Psalms 115:1** – “Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory.” Both salvation and glory terminate in God, not in the creature.
- **Deuteronomy 30:6** – “The LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.” Regeneration precedes response; God alone supplies the capacity to love Him.
- **Deuteronomy 32:39** – “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.” Both life and death are God’s prerogative.
- **Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26** – “I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them.” The new heart is not self-generated but sovereignly bestowed.
- **Daniel 4:35** – “All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, ‘What have you done?’” Sovereignty extends universally; no rival can resist His will.
- **Job 42:2** – “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.” Job’s confession: God’s purposes are invincible.
- **Isaiah 63:5** – “I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me salvation.” God alone accomplishes salvation.
- **Isaiah 64:6–7** – “We have all become like one who is unclean... There is no one who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you.” Total inability stated explicitly.
- **Psalms 65:4** – “Blessed is the one you choose and bring near, to dwell in your courts!” Election and drawing are divine acts.

- **Psalm 80:18** – “Then we shall not turn back from you; give us life, and we will call upon your name!” Life from God precedes calling on Him.
- **Psalm 85:6** – “Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?” Revival is God’s initiative, not man’s.
- **Psalm 110:3** – “Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power.” Human willingness flows from divine power.
- **Jeremiah 31:33** – “I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.” Covenant obedience comes by divine inscription, not autonomous decision.
- **Jeremiah 32:40** – “I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me.” God secures perseverance.
- **2 Chronicles 20:6** – “O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you.” Comprehensive sovereignty over history.

Additional NT Witnesses

- **Matthew 11:27** – “No one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” Revelation is granted sovereignly.
- **Matthew 16:17** – “Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.” Peter’s confession is grounded in divine revelation, not human reasoning.
- **John 3:27** – “A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.” All saving reception is divine gift.
- **John 5:21** – “For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.” Regeneration is sovereignly selective.
- **John 10:28–29** – “I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.” Eternal security is the effect of sovereign giving.
- **Acts 18:27** – “...when he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed.” Belief itself is attributed to grace.
- **Romans 4:17** – God “gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.” The pattern of Abraham’s faith parallels sovereign regeneration.
- **1 Corinthians 1:30** – “And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” Union with Christ is grounded in God’s action, not man’s will.
- **1 Thessalonians 1:4–5** – “For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.” Election evidenced by effectual reception.
- **2 Thessalonians 2:13** – “God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.” Election unto salvation, applied by the Spirit.

- **2 Timothy 1:9** – “[God] saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.” Salvation anchored in eternal purpose.
- **Hebrews 12:2** – Jesus is “the founder and perfecter of our faith.” Faith’s origin and completion are Christ’s work, not man’s.
- **James 1:18** – “Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth.” Regeneration is explicitly tied to God’s will.
- **1 Peter 1:3** – “According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again.” Divine causality in regeneration.
- **Revelation 17:17** – “For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose...” Even the wicked are subordinated to divine decree.

Verdict

The debate is not won by clever philosophy but by the plain witness of Scripture. Arminianism only survives by importing a foreign axiom—that love requires libertarian freedom—and then forcing every passage of Scripture to bend around it. Once that axiom is removed, the biblical text stands unopposed: salvation is of the Lord, from first to last. What remains is not an exegetical argument but sheer loyalty to a man-made framework over God’s self-revelation. At that point, the controversy is no longer Calvinism versus Arminianism. It is Scripture versus system. And Scripture wins.

At the end, only two coherent options remain: either grace is sovereign and effectual, saving those whom God wills, or God condemns sinners on the basis of a grace He knew could never save them. The first is biblical theology; the second is moral entrapment. There is no third way.