

Before and After Augustine

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1. Overview/Introduction

This paper centers on Augustine, even though the general topic is Calvinism. Many prefer “Reformed” over Calvinist. But a rose is a rose, no matter the name. An observation from the political world (politics is a reflection of underlying religion) is that when the name of something becomes too controversial, they simply change the name, while changing nothing of the structure. As you will see, John Calvin and Martin Luther were deeply influenced by Augustine. It has been said that the Protestant Reformation was an Augustinian revival. The revival and evolution of Augustine's contributions/mutations to Church History now bears the moniker of “Calvinism” overshadowing the source of Calvin's ideas. It has been a sad spot to me that Calvinism has been reduced largely to moment of salvation, when he had so much more to say in his Institutes of the Christian Religion (1536). More on John Calvin (1509-1564) later.

Here are a few of the more Calvinistic/Gnostic Christianisms:

1. God is in control.
2. Everything happens for a reason.
3. Humans have a sin nature.
4. Infant Baptismal Regeneration
- 5.

Many consider Augustine to be one of the greatest intellects of Church history, especially by Calvinists. Augustine's intellect is not in question here, only his theologies and influence that changed the course of Ecclesiastical and Western history. Calvinism is what I call a “worldview theology” because how one sees all of

reality is affected. There are a variety of such worldview theologies. They are essential to all cultic and heretical theologies. In my younger years I was once affected. No one could convince me otherwise; I had the plain reading of scripture to back me up. It was the Holy Spirit that got me out. They affect how we see the nature of God and the anthropology of man. It even affected how I saw scripture. By putting on theological lenses it becomes almost impossible to see what scripture is actually saying. Anyone that has had a discussion with a Calvinist, or others like I was, knows exactly what I mean.

Let me say that belief in Calvinism is not a salvation issue, at least for the Calvinist, but many, many have rejected God because of this horrible theology. The implications of God controlling every detail of life from beginning to end, divine meticulous control or divine determinism, is too much to accept. It makes God the source of evil in the world. I hear their stories, and they are often in the lines to question apologists. Evil in the world is the number one objection to God. There is a subtle (and often blatant) implication in their questions that God is the source of evil. They are not entirely wrong. It has been taught for 1500 years. It was Augustine that injected these ideas into Western church doctrine in its formative years. This will become clearer as this story unfolds. I have observed that very few that talk about Augustine's "contributions" ever talk about what was before him. What most critics criticize are post-Augustine doctrines as if they were church orthodoxy from the beginning and universal. They seem unaware of the fact that "the global church" is much more distributed and diverse than just the Manichean Christian church of the West. 3000 denominations and 10,000 cults are spread across the face of the Earth.

2. Vocabulary – Pre and Post Augustine.

Sovereignty	Election	Infant Baptism
Predestination	Foreknowledge	Control
Grace/Sola Gratia	Free Will/ Necessity	Natural Ability/Inability
Original Sin	Monergism/Synergism	Spiritually Dead
Total Depravity		

Once Gnostic cosmology and anthropology were assumed and Christianized, these words were redefined or invented to support the Augustinian/Calvinist system. When applied to God, His nature and methods were mutated. Today, many believe they are actually defending the "glory of God" and "the truth of Scripture" by promoting this system. Some will demand that you look at their scriptures. But they can only see through their Calvinistic/Gnostic lenses which color everything they see. If you don't see what they see you are probably not even saved. The problem is not with the Bible; it is the presuppositions by which the Bible is understood. Presuppositions Rule!

BTW, I call this a "worldview theology," because it affects how all of reality is understood. A worldview is difficult to unravel because it touches (consistently or inconsistently) every area of life. If one area is exposed as false, all the other areas will fill in the gap to maintain the system. These are called "rescuing devices." A person has to be willing and able to look at the overall picture of his system, as well as the details. Like the cover picture and pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. This is not an easy task; for some, it is impossible. But when it happens it is called a "paradigm shift." The view reality and the world changes.

3. The Controversaries – Historical Extremes

Throughout Christian history there have been three primary collisions of extremes, with respect to the subject of free will. They are listed below. Strangely, very few historians look at Church orthodoxy before Augustine. It is almost as if church history began with Augustine. That view is not entirely wrong. The western church began its split into two different forms of Christianity at the time of Augustine over free will.

- a. John Calvin (1509-1564) vs Jacob Arminius (1560-1609AD), 1591 – Today
- b. Augustine (354-430AD) vs Pelagius (~355~420AD), 412 – 622AD
- c. Church vs Gnostics, 40 – 412AD

a. John Calvin (1509-1564) vs Jacob Arminius (1560-1609AD), 1591 – Today

Working backward, we start with most recent controversy, and very common accusation: “If you are not a Calvinist, you are Arminian.” Or worse, a Pelagian! This is spoken as if there are only two options, no middle or alternate ground. For the 5-Point, card carrying Calvinist, this is dogma. “If you are not one of us, you are one of them.” The “them” can take a variety of forms and the form doesn’t matter if you are not Calvinist. Calvinists and Arminians have many similarities, they are not opposites, as is often portrayed. Jacob Arminius was a student of John Calvin’s writings, even spending time in Geneva. But he arrived at his objections primarily from teaching the Book of Romans. Arminianism is more of a Calvinist derivative than a parallel theology. But they both rest on a 1000-year tradition that started with Augustine.

It is not my intention to deal with the myriad of self-serve varieties of Calvinism that exist. Someone might say, “I am a 3-point Calvinist” or “I don’t believe that.” It merely means that they have a doctrinal dispute with one or more of the points. But make no mistake, they all live in the House that Augustine built and Calvin remodeled, and they have done some remodeling of their own. Same for Molinism. Most don’t really know what they about the Calvinism they claim. My goal is to make the house uninhabitable. All theologies seem subject to increasing speciation as time rolls on. Genuine enlightenment is the goal here.

It is a good idea to periodically interrogate the things you believe are true to see: (1) Has anything changed or drifted? (2) Were they ever true? If it is true, it will be purified and stronger. If it wasn’t true, you didn’t need it anyway. Truth can withstand the most rigorous interrogation, and you will be a stronger representative of the Kingdom for the effort.

So, where do the ‘5-Points’ come from? They came into being after the death of John Calvin, when Jacob Arminius’s followers were branded as heretics for challenging some of Calvin’s theology. At their Ecclesiastical trial, they presented five points of theological dispute. The court deliberated and responded with a reply to each point. This reply came to be known as the “5 Points of Calvinism” in honor of John Calvin, with the anagram of T.U.L.I.P. To disagree, makes one a heretic. The 5-Points are these:

T – Total Depravity	Humanity is so totally depraved that he has total, radical, moral inability. He is incapable of anything but sinfulness, including responding to God and is spiritually dead and sins by necessity, having been corrupted by original sin. That total depravity creates a natural repulsion to goodness of any kind, especially the things of God. It should be noted that total depravity negates ANY possibility of free will. They are polar opposites.
U – Unconditional Election	Individuals are selected for salvation from the foundation of the world and cannot even accept or reject their own election. Predestination, reinterpreted as foreordination, comes in. Anyone not elected for salvation, for reasons known only to God, by grace alone, are condemned.
L – Limited Atonement	Jesus only atoned for the sins of the elect, not the whole world.
I – Irresistible Grace	The elect are irresistibly graced to respond to God. Without which no one has any desire for God. It is also an absolutist prevenient kind of grace, necessary to accomplish ANY good or spiritual activity. Grace is no longer a free gift extended to all, but to the elect only.
P – Perseverance of the Saints	God gives His elect (saints) the necessary grace to maintain their salvation to the end of their lives. Those that fall away were never elect, never saved, never predestined. The only proof of election is at the end of a faithful life. If you have multiple children, you cannot know which are elect and which that are not, no matter how godly they seem or how much you pray. There is no assurance of election (salvation) in this life.

R.C. Sproul once said, “Everything depends on the T.” If total depravity is true, the U.L.I.P. logically follows. If total depravity is false, it self-destructs. Some people try to make some shades of grey in between, but I am sticking to the pure “5-Point” committed Calvinist. If I can show that total depravity, the foundation of the house is false, the house of cards collapses.

Something that got me pursuing this subject was a radio debate. One of the debaters asked the question: “Can God add one raindrop to a storm?” The other answered: “No, because it was all predetermined by divine decree, from the foundation of the world” I had never heard of such a dumb idea! But this is Calvinism. I heard someone mention that it is in the Westminster Confession, so I looked it up.

The Westminster Larger Catechism: Westminster Confession of 1647, 1788

Q. 12. What are the decrees of God? (This is divine determinism or meticulous divine control.)

A. God’s decrees are the wise, free, and holy decisions from the purposes of his will. By them, from all eternity and for his own glory, he has **unchangeably foreordained (predetermined) everything that happens in time**, and particularly those things that involve angels and human beings.

1. Eph 1.4,11, Rom 11.33, Rom 9.14-15,18.

2. Acts 4.27-28, Rom 9.22-23, Ps 33.11.

But man is free to do evil. Where does evil come from if all is decreed?

Q. 26. How is original sin passed from Adam and Eve to their descendants?

A. Original sin passes from Adam and Eve to their descendants by natural procreation, so that all subsequent human offspring are conceived and born in sin. (Sin is passed on sexually like an STD.)

1. Ps 51.5, Job 14.4, 15.14, Jn 3.6.

b. Augustine vs Pelagius dispute (412-550AD) – Winds of Change Are Blowing

It should be noted that nothing Pelagius said was new, and much was considered orthodox or, at least, acceptable church doctrine. He was acquitted at three church heresy trials. But Augustine, not to be deterred, introduced a new level of doctrinal intolerance to those that differed from him. These objecting heretics were condemned similarly to previous genuine heretics. Violence against them was also initiated.

One historian (link below) summed it up like this: If you want to introduce a new orthodoxy, you have to project that new orthodoxy as “having always been true and accepted” and the old orthodoxy as “having always been heretical.” Sounds like George Orwell’s “1984.”

Then the campaign needed a name, Pelagius became that name, to this day. Anyone that believes in “free will” is called a Pelagian. Similar to calling someone a Nazi today. It doesn’t have to be true, but the label alone carries such baggage that it is to be avoided (and unquestioned) at all costs. Guilt by association is often successful. After a few generations the old is forgotten and people are led to believe “it has never been otherwise.” But God, made His world such that the truth always rises to the surface. We have access to knowledge that previous generations (and academics) could only dream about.

Another of the changing winds was this: Christianity was moving west. The first of the church fathers all spoke Greek and could easily read all of the original Scriptures, apostolic documents and manuscripts in their original language. As the Gospel moved west, fewer and fewer people spoke and read Greek, while more and more spoke and read Latin. Translations had to be made. Jerome was the first to translate the Bible into Latin, called the Latin Vulgate (382-405 AD to complete). This was Augustine’s primary Bible, and it had some errors. These later Western fathers were called the Latin Fathers. So, we have the beginnings of the division between East (Greek Fathers) and West (Latin Fathers). This division was further sealed when Islam destroyed 2/3 of the Greek speaking world in the 100 years after 622AD. The Latin church, not all that strong at the time, became, by default, the best of Christianity. After 400 years of increasing division, in 1054AD, the Great Schism, permanently settled the division between the Greek East and the Latin West, Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic, respectively.

“All the fathers ... agreed with the Pelagians in attributing freedom of will to man in his present state.”
G.F. Wiggers, *An Historical Presentation of Augustinianism and Pelagianism From The Original Sources* by G.F. Wiggers, P.392, 1840 Ed.

“We have first of all to discuss the position which is maintained, that our nature has been weakened and changed by sin. I think that before all other things we have to inquire what sin is, some substance, or wholly a name without substance, whereby is expressed not a thing, not an existence, not some sort of a body, but the doing of a wrongful deed. I suppose that this is the case; and if so, how could that which lacks all substance have possibly weakened or changed human nature?”

“No will can take away that which is proved to be inseparably implanted in nature.”

Pelagius, *On Nature and Grace* by Augustine

“Free will has not perished, since the Lord says by the prophets, ‘if you be willing and will hear Me, you shall eat the good things of the land; if you are unwilling, and will not hear, the sword shall devour you.’”

Julian of Eclanum, *Letter to Rufus of Thessalonica*

“Free will is an all by nature, and could not perish by the sin of Adam. Which assertion is confirmed by the authority of all scriptures.”

Julian of Eclanum, *Letter to Rome*, P.1, Ed. By Daniel R. Jennings

“By the sin of the first man, that is, of Adam, free will perished; and that no one has now the power of living well, but that all are constrained into sin by the necessity of their flesh...”

Julian of Eclanum about Augustine, *Letter to Rome*, P.1, Ed. By Daniel R. Jennings

“[Julian] sensed the carryover of Manichean thought from Augustine into the Christian Church...”

This is why Julian referred to the Augustinians as ‘those Manicheans.’”

Daniel R Jennings, **Julian of Eclanum** about Augustine, *Letter to Rome* by, P.1, Ed. By Daniel R. Jennings.

Julian and 18 other bishops opposed Augustine were labeled Pelagians, condemned as heretics, excommunicated and ended up losing everything.

i. Augustine (354-430AD) Brief Bio

Augustine was 10 years a Manichean Gnostic.

384AD – Converted

387AD – Baptized by Ambrose

391AD – Ordained a priest

396AD – Became Bishop of Hippo

397AD – He wrote ‘Confessions of Augustine’

412AD – Publicly pushes new theology, original sin, infant baptism, Pelagius becomes the focus

I am an early Augustinian, not a late Augustinian.

God’s universal salvific will vs Augustine’s election theology

Grace (absolute prevenient), Predestination (preordination), Total Depravity (total inability) & Original Sin; intimately related, and to disagree with Augustine’s definition, is heresy.

Eastern Aesthetic Theology, Jerome vs Augustine; Greek vs Latin: two different versions of Christianity

Augustine believed in baptismal regeneration and loss of salvation, virtually no one that calls themselves

“Reformed” believes that today.

ii. Augustine Early Views

“In the same year in which he read the scriptures and was disappointed in them, Augustine joined the Manichean sect ...”

“For nearly nine years Augustine was a Manichean auditor. At first he was a zealous partisan who contended publicly for his new faith, and did not hesitate to ridicule the doctrines of the church and especially the Old Testament scriptures...”

John Gibb and William Montgomery, *The Confessions of Augustine*, Introduction, P.XXI, XXXII, University Press, 1908

What about Manicheanism led Augustine to be “disappointed in the Bible” and later, ridicule them? See below in the section called “What is Gnosticism?” on page 7.

When Augustine first converted to the Christianity, he defended the orthodox doctrine of free will when debating against the Manicheans. That's why quotes from his earlier writings can be found in which he defended the doctrine of man's free will.

“We [Christians] assert the liberty of the will, whereby our actions are rendered either moral or immoral, and keep it free from every bond of necessity, on account of the righteous judgment of God.”

Augustine, *The Works of The Rev. John Fletcher*, Late Vicar of Madley, Vol.4, P.446, Published by John Mason, 1859 Ed.

iii. Pelagius' Views

After Pelagius was finally declared a heretic much of his writing was burned. But enough remains to get an accurate view of what he believed, Then, there are the letters and books speaking on what he believed, as well as the accusations against him. These are a little more suspect.

“In all there is free will equally by nature ...”

Pelagius, *The History of The Church of Christ From the Days of The Apostles*, , P.326, Joseph Milner & Thomas Haweis

“The law having been given, the will is of its own strength sufficient to fulfill that law. Though not assisted by any grace, imparted by the Holy Spirit, in addition to instructions in that law.”

Augustine quoting Pelagius

“The grace of God is given in proportion to our just desserts.”

Augustine on Pelagius

Origen, Ambrose, Jerome introduced a subtle shift in the ideas of foreknowledge and grace. They said, “God dispenses His grace among men according to the use which He foresees that each will make of it.” Grace is no longer universally and freely given but becoming a force to enable goodness. As we deserve it, God gives us grace, in proportion to what God knows we will do with it. “God helps those that help themselves.”

c. The Church vs The Gnostics (~40-412AD)

Initially Augustine argued against the Gnostics and in agreement with the early fathers on free will.

There were two conflicting views of human nature in the days of the early church. The early Christians believe that free will is in the nature of all men. Some men use that freedom to be good, some men use that freedom to be evil, but they viewed that the moral character of man was altogether voluntary. The Gnostics on the other hand, believed that mankind had such ruined and corrupted natures they were not free to choose between good and evil. They viewed the actions and behaviors of men as being necessitated and caused by their natures and therefore they viewed the moral character of man as to be sort of involuntary not truly their fault but a fault in their design.

In the days of early Christianity there were many Gnostic sects denied the freedom of man's will. One of them was started by Marcion. One of the greatest competitors to the early church was Manicheanism started by Mani also known as Manes (216-276AD), who was the Persian philosopher. The early church chose Archelaus, a Bishop in the early church, to represent the position that God created man with free will. Mani on the other hand, as the founder of Manicheanism, took the position that man's nature was so corrupt and so ruined that free will was not part of our nature. The debate was recorded in "The Acts of Archelaus," also known as "The Disputation with Manes (278AD)".

The debate between Archelaus and Mani was at the core of the debate between the early church and Gnosticism. The Gnostics were teaching that the flesh was in and of itself sinful, which is why they denied that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. In Gnosticism, sin was a substance of the body which is inherited at conception. But in the early church, sin was a choice of the will which was originated by the individual.

At the end of the debate the judges ruled in favor of our Achilleus and stated that man does in fact have a free will and ruled against Mani's position that our nature was so depraved and corrupted that liberty was not part of our constitution. Mani was declared a heresiarch, the founder of a heretical movement.

"All the creatures that God made he made very good, and he gave to every individual the sense of free will, by which standard he also instituted the law of judgment ... our will is constituted to choose either to sin or not to sin ... and certainly whoever will, may keep the commandments. Whoever despises them and turns aside to what is contrary to them, shall yet without doubt have to face this law of judgment ... but the judges responded, 'There can be no doubt that every individual in using his own proper power of will, may shape his course in whatever direction he pleases.'"

Archelaus and The Judges (278), The Disputation with Manes, 32-33

"God has always preserved freedom and the power of self-government in man."

"Man is possessed of free will from the beginning."

Irenaeus, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, P.286-287, Hendrickson Publishers

"...the faculty of free will is never taken away..."

Origen, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, P.289, Hendrickson Publishers

"The free will and natural ability of man were held by the whole church ... natural inability was to that of the Pagan philosophers, the Gnostics. and the Manicheans."

Lyman Beecher, Views in Theology, P.36, Published by Truman and Smith, 1836 Ed.

"The early Christians didn't believe that man is totally depraved and incapable of doing any good. They taught that humans are capable of obeying and loving God."

"There was a religious group labeled as heretics by the early Christians ... they taught that man is totally depraved... the group I'm referring to are the Gnostics."

David Berzo, Will The Real Heretics Please Stand Up, P.64, 66, Published by Scroll Publishing

i. What is Gnosticism?

Before we proceed, we will look at some history, particularly that of Gnosticism.

The ideas that Gnosticism embodies are very old. At the time when the Israelites were entering their promised land, the gods of the people were telling their people origin stories. Yahweh had given to Moses the true account of the heavens and the earth, which He Himself has accomplished, so that the Israelites would have a strong defense against the false stories.

One of the most ancient stories says that in the before time, two of the gods had a fight. One god hacked the other god in two pieces, one half became the heavens and the other half became the earth (spiritual and physical realms). Humans were created on the earth to serve the gods. Actually, it was supposed to be the other way around, Heb 1:14, 1Cor 6:3. The humans would grow food and bring it to the gods, as well as sacrifice their virgins. There were a variety of similar stories all over the world. As that happens with all false stories, they evolve over time and diversify. It is hard to remember a lie accurately. That is why Yahweh had His story written

down by Moses, for all to see. But as then, so is now, there are those trying to rewrite Yahweh's history. These stories can take hundreds of years to develop and be embellished.

Long before the label of Gnosticism was assigned and there were people called Gnostics, was the observation that the world was messed up. There were various mythologies to explain how this happened. BTW, all spirits, since the beginning, knew the truth of their creation, but the fallen angels, the fallen sons of God, wanted to hide that truth. Eventually, in an attempt to slander Yahweh, God of the Old Testament, the story was spread that Yahweh had made the creation corrupt on purpose and enslaved humans in bodies made of the same corrupt matter (the dust of the earth).

Humans were said to be sparks that had fallen from the eternal bonfire of truth and righteousness. Hinduism and its derivatives come from this. Nirvana is that place of eternal being to which our own 'drop of being' or spark of divinity will be spliced back into the eternal 'cosmic consciousness' from which we had fallen. Reincarnation allows the soul to improve itself over many incarnations in preparation for its homecoming. The cycles of life grind on. Any system of self-improvement to become "good enough" is a scam.

Further, there was a true and righteous god above Yahweh. Eventually he morphed into the father of Jesus, who had come to bring the secret, sacred knowledge that will set men free, as the Divine Logos, the Word. He didn't come to die for our sins, but to show us how to "shed this mortal toil" and return home, if you were one of the elected ones and predestined.

All this crystallized into two foundational dichotomies, a hard dualism. BTW, religions that are this dualistic are inherently contradictory, and embellishments are added to explain the contradictions. Think also Islam.

First, all of creation is made up of two polar opposite realms: the pure spirit realm of light and truth and love, and the material world of death, decay, corruption, darkness and lies. The unknown god of light rules the pure spirit realm, and Yahweh, the evil god of darkness rules the corrupt material world, and they are never mixed. They are completely separate islands of reality. Spiritual is good, material is bad. Thus, flesh, being made of the dust of the earth, is also bad.

Since man is made of the "dust of the earth" he is not just fallen, he is existentially, transcendently corrupt and sinful. He is sinful by necessity. Every human being is corrupt (sinful) from birth. In the Gnostic view, because the world was inherently corrupt, it didn't matter what you did with your body, because your spirit was pure. But it was considered sinful to have a baby because you were adding to the corruption of the world. In some groups strict piety and celibacy were promoted. Salvation, the revealing of the secret, sacred knowledge, was only available to those preselected, predestined and fated from the beginning of the world, centuries before Augustine.

The idea of the Demiurge (craftsman or artisan, more below) originated in ancient Greek thought through Plato (428-347BC) in his highly dualistic philosophy. He used it to explain how objects in the realm of forms or ideals arrived in the realm of the physical world. These two realms were completely disconnected from each other, so some explanation was necessary. Later the Demiurge developed into the evil god of the Gnostics that created the physical world, over against the loving god of the pure spiritual realm of light. While not in name, it is a recognized entity around the world from ancient times. The yin-yang symbol is a reflection of this conflict. The corrupted physical world is the post-flood world in the Bible, except that Yahweh intentionally created the world, from the beginning, corrupt and enslaved humanity with physical corruption. Originally man came from the bonfire of light and life. As sparks (sparks of deity) they drifted away, only to be enslaved in the corrupt physical world in physical bodies.

The "gnosis" or knowledge was their means of salvation enabling them to return home to the original fire. Also known as the infinite ocean of being (Hinduism), and the cosmic consciousness (New-Age). In the 2nd and 3rd centuries, as Gnosticism achieved its pinnacle, they employed a variety of verses in the Bible to support these ideas to influence Christians. These are called "proof texts." Verses that may, or may not, prove the claims of the teacher. Jesus came, not as the Savior, but as a model and revealer of the sacred secrets. After all, He was the Logos, the Divine Word. The story of divine determinism goes back to ancient times. The Stoics, founded by

Zeno of Citium (334-262BC) and the Essenes of Qumran (2nd-1st centuries BC) both had a strong predestination component to their beliefs. The idea of predestination, or fate, goes back to the Sumerians.

At the time of the writing of the New Testament, one group promoted the idea that Jesus could not have had a physical body, but only “seemed” to have a body. The followers of this heresy were called “Docetists” and the heresy was called “Docetism” which means “to seem.” They were Proto-Gnostics. The reason Jesus could not have a physical body was because He was from the pure spirit realm. To take on a physical body would have meant total corruption. Pure spirit and a sinful flesh CANNOT be mixed, so Jesus could not have had a physical body. Neither could He have died on the cross. The apostle John was writing about them when he called them deceivers and antichrists:

John 1:1-3, 14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 **All things were made through Him**, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

14 And **the Word became flesh** and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

1 John 4:2-3

2 By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has **come in the flesh** is of God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has **come in the flesh** is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and **is now already in the world**.

2 John 1:7

7 For **many deceivers** have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as **coming in the flesh**. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

The Docetists were the proto-Gnostics which would evolve over the next two hundred years and peak at the time of Mani (216-276AD), then be Christianized under Augustine (354-430AD).

Manichean Gnosticism was founded by the Persian philosopher/prophet Mani (216-274AD) and became popular in the Roman Empire. It became the pinnacle of Gnostic thought and activity. It was viewed as the chief threat to the Church, as they were claiming to be the true Christians, following the true Christ. Mani himself claimed to be an apostle of Jesus Christ. Hence, many debates.

Adapted from The Demiurge: From Plato to Gnosticism

By Nitten Nair

<https://mythlok.com/the-demiurge-from-plato-to-gnosticism/>

Origins

The term “Demiurge” comes from the Greek word “δημιουργός” (demiourgos), which means “craftsman” or “artisan.” In its earliest usage, the term referred to a skilled worker or creator. However, its philosophical significance was established by Plato in his dialogue “Timaeus.” Plato describes the Demiurge as a benevolent creator who fashions the physical universe. The Demiurge is not a god in the traditional sense but a cosmic craftsman who organizes **the pre-existing chaotic matter** into a coherent and harmonious cosmos. Plato’s version works according to the eternal forms or ideals, ensuring that the physical world reflects the order and beauty of these higher realities.

MPH Note: You will sometimes hear it said that when Yahweh created in Genesis 1, He “brought order out of the chaos.” Now you know where this false interpretation comes from. In the beginning there was no chaos, as everything Yahweh did (starting from nothing pre-existing) was orderly. Almost all the ancient god origin stories (theogonies) start from something pre-existing. The gods somehow came out of the material cosmos.

The Demiurge in Gnosticism

The concept of the Demiurge underwent a significant transformation in Gnostic thought. Gnosticism, a diverse and influential religious movement that emerged in the early centuries of the Common Era, reinterpreted the Demiurge (the errant offspring of Sophia) in a much more negative light.

In Gnostic cosmology, it is often depicted as a lesser, ignorant, or even malevolent deity (Yahweh of the Bible) who creates and governs the material world. Unlike Plato’s benevolent craftsman, the Gnostic Demiurge is often seen as a false god who traps human souls in the physical realm. This world, created by the Demiurge, is considered a flawed and imperfect reflection of the true, transcendent reality, which is the domain of the supreme, unknowable God (the Father of Jesus).

The Demiurge and Dualism

Central to the Gnostic understanding of the Demiurge is the concept of dualism—the belief in two fundamental and opposing realities. In this view, anything spiritual is seen as pure, good, and eternal, while the physical world is seen as corrupt, evil, and transient. The Demiurge, as the creator of the physical world, is thus often viewed as the antagonist of the true, benevolent God.

End Nitten Nair

4. Pre-Augustinian Orthodoxy

The Early Church Before Augustine, On Free Will and Original Sin - Winkie Pratney

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bjk7gKyVmo>

Beyond Augustine – Jesse Morrell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhLF-llpFX0>

What are the major differences between the early church and the Gnostics? In their view of human nature, the early church believed that man had free will by nature and could choose between good and evil. The Gnostics on the other hand believed man was created with such a ruined constitution that he was forced to sin by the necessity of his nature.

The early church did not believe that man was given free will to earn salvation by works.

Early Church – “Is the will free or not?” had common agreement between all the theological schools.

Alexandria, Antioch, Carthage, Constantinople, Hippo, Jerusalem, Nicea, Rome: ALL agreed for 300 years.

1. Rejection of the idea of free will is the view of heretics.
2. Free will is a gift given to man by God. All things come from God.
3. Man has free will because he is made in God’s image, and God has free will.

If the will was once thought of as free, then the teaching that man does not have a free will, and that his will is in some way enslaved and requires special gifts from God, is a HISTORICAL (more than theological) position that has been sustained right from the early church until today. If not, the teaching that the will is enslaved and is unable to make right choices, is an interjection into Christian history, and has been popular for the last 1500 years, was not the first view of the church.

“All the fathers are unanimous on the freedom of the human will ...”

Walter Arthur Copinger, A Treatise on Predestination, Election, and Grace. Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical by Walter Arthur Copinger, P.320, Published by James Nisbet, 1889 Ed.

“The Latin fathers have always retained the word ‘free will’ as if man stood yet upright.”

Doctrine of The Will by Asa Mahan, P.60, Published by Truth in Heart

To the Calvinist free will = uprightness = self-righteousness and arrogance. Man cannot be allowed such freedom.

“God wishing men and angels to follow His will, resolved to create them free to do righteousness. But if the word of God foretells that some angels and men shall certainly be punished, it did so because it foreknew they would be unchangeably wicked, but **not because God created them so**. So that if they repent, **all who wish for it**, can obtain mercy from God.”

Justin Martyr (100-165) a philosopher, great apologist, Dialogue with Trypho

“Just as with men who have freedom of choice as to both virtue and vice, for you would not either honor the good or punish the bad unless **vice and virtue were in their own power** and some are diligent in the matters entrusted to them and others faithless, so it is among the angels.”

Athenagoras (100s), The Embassy (177AD)

“For God made man free ... we were not created to die but we died by our own faults. Our free will has destroyed us. We who were free have become slaves we've been sold through sin. Nothing evil had been created by God, we ourselves have manifested wickedness, but we who have manifested it are able again to reject it. How is it that God did not so make us that we should not sin and incur condemnation? If man had been made so he would not have belonged to himself but would have been the instrument of him that moved him. How in that case, would a man be different from a harp on which another played or from a ship which another guides. where the praise and the blame reside in the hands of the performer or the steersman, they being on instruments made for the use of him in whom his skills? But God in His benignity chose not so to make man, but by freedom he exalted him above many of his creatures.”
(People are not pawns for the games, cogs for the wheels.)

Theophilus of Antioch (169), First to use the word Trinity ~175AD

“He quotes a scripture, this expression, how often would I have gathered thy children together and thou wouldst not, sets forth the **ancient law of human liberty**, because **God made man a free agent, from the beginning** possessing his own soul to obey the behests of God **voluntarily, and not by compulsion** of God. For there is no coercion with God but a goodwill towards us is present with Him continually and therefore does He give good counsel to all, and in man as well as angels, He has placed **the power of choice**, for angels are rational beings, so that those who had yielded obedience might justly possess what is good, given indeed by God but preserved by themselves.

If then it were not in our power to do or not to do these things, what reason had the apostle and much more the Lord Himself to give us counsel to do some things and to abstain from others. But because **man is possessed of free will from the beginning** and God is possessed of free will, in whose likeness man was created, advice has always given to him to keep fast the good, which thing is done by means of obedience to God.”

Irenaeus (130-200), Against Heresies

“But we have **heard by the scriptures that self-determining choice and refusal** have been given by the Lord’s command, rest in the infallible criteria of faith, manifesting a willing spirit, since **we have chosen life** and believed God through his voice. But that nothing is without the will of the Lord in the universe, remains to say that such [bad] things happen without the prevention of God, for this alone saves both the provenance and the goodness of God. We must not therefore think that he actively produced afflictions, be it far from us that we should think this, but we must be persuaded that He does not prevent those that caused them but overrules, for good, the crimes of His enemies.”

“God does not originate awful things that happen, but when they do happen, He overrules, for good, the crimes of his enemies, Romans 8:28. There was again self-determining choice.”

Clement of Alexandria (150-215), Stromata, book2, ch4

“Indicating the presence of God's image and likeness in [man] by nothing so well as by the constitution of his nature. You will find that when He sets before man **good and evil, life and death**, that the entire course of discipline is arranged in precepts by God's calling men from sin, **threatening and exhorting** them, and that on no other ground than that **man is free with the will either for obedience or resistance.**”

Tertullian (155-225), Latin theologian

“Now it ought to be known that the holy apostles, on preaching the faith of Christ, delivered themselves with the utmost clearness on certain points which they believed to be necessary to everyone. This also is clearly defined in the teaching of the church that every rational soul is possessed of free will and volition.”

Origen (185-254), Principis Preface

“In the banquet of the 10 virgins, now those who decide that man is not possessed a free will and affirm that he is governed by the unavoidable necessities of faith, are guilty of impiety towards God himself, making Him out to be the cause and author of human evil. I say that man was made with free will, not as if they were already existing some evil which he had the power of choosing if he wished, but that the power of obeying and disobeying God is the only cause [of evil].”

Methodius (260-311), antagonist of Origen except for free will

“That those ancient writers, in general, say that Manichaeans denied free-will. The reason is, that the father's believed and maintained, against the Manicheans, that whatever state man is in, he has the command over his own actions and has equally, power to do good or evil.”

Beausobre, The Christian Examiner, Vol.1, P.70, Published by James Miller, 1824 Ed.

“The Manicheans so denied free will as to hold a fatal necessity of sinning...”

W.F. Hook, A Church Dictionary, P.279, Published by John Murry, 1852 Ed.

“Free will was given because he who is good by his own choice is really good; But he who has made good by another under necessity is not really good because he is not what he is by his own choice ...”

Clement, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol.8, Published by BRC CD, P.355. Mentioned in Philippians 4:3.

“It is therefore in the power of everyone, since man has been made possessed of free-will, whether he shall hear us to life, or the demons to destruction.”

Clement, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol.8, Published by BRC CD, P.740

“For no other reason does God punish the sinner, either in the present or in the future world, except because he knows that the sinner was able to conquer but neglected to gain the victory.”

Recognitions of Clement of Rome, 111.23, Vol.8, IX, 30

“If anyone is truly religious, he is a man of God; But if he is irreligious, he is a man of the devil, made such, not by nature, but by his own choice. ... and there is set before us life upon our observance [of God's precepts], but death as the result of disobedience and everyone according to the choice he makes, shall go to his own place, let us flee from death, and make choice of life.”

The Epistle of Ignatius to The Magnesians, Chap.5 (Long Version)

“Men are possessed with free will and endowed with the faculty of making a choice. It is not true therefore, that some are by nature good and others bad.”

Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book IV, Chapter XXXVII

“Man is endowed with a faculty of distinguishing good and evil; So that without compulsion, he has the power, by his own will and choice, to perform God's commandments.”

Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book IV, Chapter XXXIX

“Man is possessed of free will from the beginning, and God is possessed a free will (in whose likeness man was created) ...”

Irenaeus, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, P.287, Hendrickson Publishers

“This expression, ‘How often would I have gathered thy children together, and thou wouldst not,’ set forth the ancient law of human liberty, because made man a free agent from the beginning, possessing his own soul to obey the behests of God voluntarily, and not by the compulsion of God.”

Irenaeus, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol.1, Published by BRC CD, P.1117

“We have learned from the prophets, and we hold it to be true, that punishment, chastisement, and rewards are rendered according to the merit of each man's actions. Otherwise, if all things happen by fate, then nothing is in our own power. For if it is predestined that one man be good and another man evil, then the first is not deserving of praise and the other to be blamed. Unless humans have the power of avoiding evil and choosing good by free choice, they are not accountable for their actions - whatever they may be ... For neither would a man be worthy of praise if he did not himself choose the good but was merely created for that end. Likewise. if a man were created evil, he would not deserve punishment, since he was not evil of himself, being unable to do anything else than what he was made for.”

Justin Martyr, First Apology, Chap.43

“No reward can be justly bestowed no punishment can be justly inflicted upon him who is good or bad by necessity and not by his own choice.”

Tertullian, Doctrine of The Will by Asa Maham, P.61, Published by Truth in Heart

“You will find that when He sets before man good and evil, life and death, that the entire course of discipline is arranged in precepts by God's calling men from sin, and threatening and exhorting them; And this, on no other ground than that man is free, with a will either for obedience or resistance.”

Tertullian, Against Marcion, Book II, Chap.5E

“Those [pagans] who decide that man does not have free, will but say that he is governed by the unavoidable necessities of fate, are guilty of impiety toward God Himself, making him out to be the cause and author of human evils.”

Methodius, The Banquet of The Ten Virgins, Discourse 8, Chap.16

“The divine being is not by nature implicated in evils. Therefore, our birth is not the cause of these things.” Also, men are “Possessing free will and not by nature evil.”

Methodius, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol.6, Published by BRC CD, P.696, 698

“There is nothing evil by nature, but it is by use that evil things become such. So I say, says he, that man was made with free will, not as if they were already evil in existence, which he had the power of choosing if he wished, but on account of his capacity of obeying or disobeying God. For this was the meaning of the gift of free will ... and this alone was evil, namely, disobedience ...”

Methodius, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol.6, P.746, Published by BRC CD

“God did not make evil, nor is he at all in any way the author of evil; but whatever failed to keep the law, which He in all justice ordained, after being made by Him with a faculty of free will, for the purpose of

guarding and keeping it, is called evil. Now it is the gravest fault to disobey God, by overstepping the bounds of that righteousness which is consistent with free.”

Methodius, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol.6, P.750, Published by BRC CD

“The creator of all things has impressed a natural law upon the soul of every man, as an assistant and ally in his conduct, pointing out to him the right way by this law; but, by the free liberty with which he is endowed, making the choice of what is best worthy of praise and acceptance, because he has acted rightly, not by force, but from his own free will, when he had it in his power to act otherwise, as, again, making him who chooses what is worst, deserving of blame and punishment, as having by his own motion neglected the natural law, and becoming the origin and fountain of wickedness, and misusing himself, not from any extraneous necessity, but from free will and judgment. The fault is in him who chooses, not in God. For God has not made nature or the substance of the soul bad; for He who is good can make nothing but what is good. Everything is good, which is according to nature. Every rational soul has naturally a good free will formed for the choice of what is good. But when a man acts wrongly, nature is not to be blamed; for what is wrong, takes place not according to nature, but contrary to nature, it being the work of choice, and not of nature!”

Eusibius, The Christian Examiner, Vol.1, P.66, Published by James Miller, 1824 Ed.

“The devil and his oracles hang all things upon fate, and taking away that which is in our power, and arises from self-motion of free will ... brings this also into bondage to necessity.”

Eusibius, The Cause of God and Truth by John Gill, P.502, 1838 Ed.

“For as much as all men are of the same nature, having power to hold and to do that which is good, and having power again to lose it, and not to do what is right. Before men of sense (and how much more before God) some ... are justly accused and receive condign punishment. because they refuse what was just and right.”

Irenaeus, An Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism by John Fletcher, Vol.2, P.207-208, Published by Carlton & Porter

“Those who do not do [good] will receive the just judgment of God, because they had not worked good when they had it in their power to do so. But if some had been made bad by nature, and others good, these latter would not be deserving of praise for being good, for they were created that way. Nor would the former be reprehensible, for that is how they were made. However, all men are of the same nature. They are all able to hold fast and do what is good. On the other hand, they have the power to cast good from them and not to do it.”

Irenaeus, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, P.287, Hendrickson Publishers

“In all there is free will equally by nature ...”

Pelagius, The History of The Church of Christ From the Days of The Apostles, P.326, Joseph Milner & Thomas Haweis

“The scriptures emphasize the freedom of will. They condemn those who sin and approve those who do right ... We are responsible for being bad and worthy of being cast outside. For it is not the nature in us that is the cause of the evil; Rather it is the voluntary choice that works evil.”

“The heretics [Gnostics] introduced the doctrine of different natures.”

Origen, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, P.289, 291 Hendrickson Publishers

“What is plainer than that the ancient divines, for 300 years after Christ, those at least who flourished before St. Augustine, maintained the liberty of our will, or an indifference of two contrary things, free from all internal and external necessity.”

Episcopi, An Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism by John Fletcher, Vol.2 P.209, Published by Carlton & Porter

“Even in Pelagius’ own day, Pelagius’ teaching on ‘the freedom of the human will’ was ‘in agreement with many in the West’ and with ‘the East generally...’”

Williston Walker, A History of The Christian Church, P.185, 1918 Ed., Published by C. Scribner’s Sons

“Free will was the doctrine of the primitive church for the first four or five centuries after the Bible was written, the church which received the ‘lively oracles’ directly from the hands of some of those whom they were written, to wit: the writers of the New Testament. It should be borne in mind here that at the time the sacred canon was completed the doctrine of necessity was held by the leading sects in the Jewish church. It was also the fundamental article of the creeds of all the sects in philosophy throughout the world, as well as of all the forms of heathenism then extant.

If the doctrine of necessity, as its advocates maintain, is the doctrine taught to the church by inspired apostles and the writers of the New Testament, we should not fail to find, under such circumstances, that churches planted by them, rooted and grounded in this doctrine.”

Doctrine of The Will by Asa Mahan, P.59, Published by Truth in Heart

5. Augustine’s Change of View:

Augustine’s Early View was actually the more Biblical view.

The Division Caused by Augustine – The Natural inability of Man

Every cultic/heretical idea ultimately needs scriptural support. Some search long and hard to find proof texts to back up their claims. This is the very essence of “mishandling the Word of God,” 2Cor 4:2.

To justify his new “Original Sin” doctrine, Augustine used Jerome’s faulty Latin translation of Rom 5:12. Jerome said “in whom all have sinned” rather than “because that all have sinned.” “In whom” can only refer to Adam, therefore all have sinned in Adam. Each person is born in sin. Also Psa 51:4 This was Augustine’s leap of logic based on Jerome’s bad translation. It is unknown if the Greek manuscript was bad or Jerome’s translation. It stood for 1000 years until Erasmus pointed out the error. But it had become too well established.

Is “Original Sin” in scripture? Is it in debate transcripts. No! After years of defending free will against the Manicheans, Augustine went back to his Manichean roots when debating the Pelagians and continued to develop the doctrine of man’s inability because of original sin. In many places it is considered heretical to even question Original Sin. BTW, you will also hear that we carry the “guilt of Adam,” but this is nowhere in Scripture.

“I have tried hard to maintain the free choice of the human will, but the grace of God prevailed.”

Augustine, Retractions (Retractiones) 2.1, Augustine: Earlier Writings Ed. J.H.S Burleigh (Philadelphia: Westminster Press. 1953), CCI. 57, P.89-90

“[Augustine] was at the early part of his life a Manichean.” But “some remains of it seemed to have been still left upon his mind...” by teaching that man did not possess free will.

George Pretyman, A Refutation of Calvinism, P.574, Published by T. Cadell, 1823 Ed.

“The two great intellectual influences upon Augustine prior to his conversion were Manichaeism and Greek philosophy.”

John K. Ryan, The Confessions of Saint Augustine, Introduction, P.23, Random House, 1960

“Augustine, after studying the philosophy of Manes, the Persian philosopher, brought into the church from Manichaeism **the doctrine of original sin.**”

Harry Conn, Sin & Holiness by Gordon C. Olson, Forward by Harry Conn, Published by Men For Missions

“Augustine defended free will so long as he had to do with the Manicheans. But when he came to dispute with the Pelagians he changed his system. Then he denied that kind of freedom which before he had defended; and, so far as I am able to judge, his sentiments no longer differed from theirs [the Manicheans]

concerning the servitude of the will. He ascribed the servitude to the corruption which original sin brought into our nature; whereas the Manicheans ascribed it to an evil quality eternally inherent in matter.”

Beausobre, The Christian Examiner, Vol.1, P.70-71, Published by James Miller, 1824 Ed.

“I labored indeed on behalf of the free choice of the human will, **but God’s grace overcame**, and I could only teach that point where the apostle is perceived to have said with the most evident truth, ‘who has made you to differ, and what do you have that you have not received? Now if you have received it, why do you glory as if you have received it not?’ The martyr Cyprian was also desirous of setting forth **faith** then, as well as in its beginning, as in its completion, **as God’s gift**, and let no one have any doubt whatever, unless he desires to resist the plain of scripture, that this gift is given to some, while to some, it is not given.”

Augustine

“Free choice of the will was present in that man who was the first to be formed ... but after he sinned by that free will, we who have descended from his progeny have been plunged into necessity.”

Augustine, Augustine, Manichaeism, and The Good by Kam-Lun E. Lee, P.122, Published by Dissertation.com

“By Adam’s transgression, the freedom of the human will has been completely lost.”

Augustine, An Historical Presentation of Augustinianism and Pelagianism From The Original Sources, P.332, G.F. Wiggers, 1840 Ed.

“By the greatness of the first sin, we have lost the free will to love God.”

“By subverting the rectitude in which he was created, he is followed with the punishment of not being able to do right.”

“The freedom to abstain from sin has been lost as a punishment of sin.”

Augustine, An Historical Presentation of Augustinianism and Pelagianism From The Original Sources, P.128-129, G.F. Wiggers, 1840 Ed.

“For it is ours to believe and to will, but it is His to give to those who believe the power (grace) of doing good works through the Holy Spirit.”

“Nothing good or virtuous happens in the world except that God moves through a person, unbeliever or believer.”

“It is not unless God gives a special gift of grace and faith, [the will] is not free to do anything but sin.”

Augustine

“Faith (later grace) was an irresistible gift, given by God, to a few people, whom He had selected, on some basis known only Himself. Without it, no man could perform any good, whether in thought, affection, will or action.” (Beginnings of predestination and election.)

Augustine

If the sin of Adam had been removed by baptism, what about children of baptized parents?

“It is quite possible for parents to transmit to their children that which they do not possess themselves. I.e. sin! Children are born in Satan’s power because “They are born of the union of the sexes which cannot even accomplish its own honorable function without the incidence of shameful lust. Sexual intercourse from any other motive than procreation is a venial sin, and the act was always shameful since it was always tinged with passion. Thus, only Christ was born pure since only He was conceived without sexual intercourse.”

Augustine

God could have given it to others if He had so chosen, because it is rejected by no hard heart, in other words, an irresistible gift of faith when it comes, not no matter how hard your heart is, you would accept it if God gave it to you, but He did not. Without it, no man could perform any good, whether in thought, will, affection, or action. God gives to some people that makes it possible for them to perform good acts, to make good choices. I will give this power to some people but not to others. Don't forget the Gnostic cosmology of fate and evil.

It is Augustinian that made faith an irresistible gift. It is Pelagian that holds free choice is genuine responsible choice. But every form of civilization has standards of virtue.

Augustine's View on Original Sin & Summary

1. All Christians agree that babies are baptized to regenerate them into Christ's body, the catholic Church.
2. This shows they are born under the guilt of the sin committed by Adam.
This is why they must be baptized to regenerate them into Christ's body
3. The determination of who should be regenerated does not depend on the will of those selected.
Therefore, the salvation of the baby does not depend on the will of the baby depends on the will of another.

Augustine on Predestination and Election

Election became God's choice of whom should be believers.

Election became unconditional selection, with no deference to the will.

Predestination became the preparation for the actual endowment of grace.

Grace became a force, the irresistible gift of grace and perseverance.

Augustine's View on Compulsion

Luke 14:23

Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, **and compel them to come in**, that my house may be filled.'

"Since it is the Master's command to "compel them" to come in, it is okay for His people to force unbelievers to get saved. If God uses force to change men's will then so His people do the same thing."

Augustine

Results

1. An unbaptized baby is condemned until baptized. It will go to hell under the guilt of Adam's sin because all have sinned in Adam. (From a false reading of Romans 5:12.)
2. Salvation does not have anything to do with the choice of the person who gets saved. It has to do with the will of another. (Parents or God)
3. What is true of babies must also be true of adults. God selects some to be regenerated on some basis known only to Himself and not dependent on the adults own will.

Does man is possessing the power of self-determination?

Deuteronomy 11:26-28

26 "See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: 27 the blessing, **if you listen** to the commandments of Yahweh your God, which I am commanding you today; 28 and the curse, **if you do not listen** to the commandments of Yahweh your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by walking after other gods which you have not known.

Joshua 24:15

15 If it is evil in your sight to serve Yahweh, **choose for yourselves** today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, **we will serve Yahweh.**

Jeremiah 21:8

8 “You shall also say to this people, ‘Thus says Yahweh, “Behold, **I set before you the way of life and the way of death.**”

Ezekiel 18:30-31

30 “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his way,” declares Lord Yahweh. “Turn back and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you. 31 Cast away from yourselves all your transgressions which you have committed and **make yourselves a new heart** and a new spirit! **Now why will you die,** O house of Israel?”

Acts 17:30

Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, **God is now commanding men that everyone everywhere should repent**

“Sin did not take away from man any of the natural powers that God had given him.”

Cornelius Van Til, The Defense of The Faith, P.158, Published by Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing

“No faculty of our nature was taken away from us by original sin.” (Having been made in the image of God.)

Dr. Twist, Views in Theology, P.61, Published by Truman and Smith, 1836 Ed.

The early church doctrine of free will was soon replaced with the Gnostic concept of a necessitated will because of a ruined, corrupted, sinful nature. Augustinian theology was a radical departure from the views of the early church, and like Calvinism after it, Augustinians used governmental force to silence any opposition so that its views could spread without challenge. There are subtle differences and yet major similarities between Augustinianism and full-blown Gnosticism. The Gnostics for example thought that man's nature was ruined and corrupt because man was created by an inferior God known as the demiurge. Augustine on the other hand, agreed with the Gnostics that man's nature was so corrupt that we didn't have a free will, yet he said God made it this way on account of Adam's sin. The Gnostics taught that the flesh was sinful in and of itself therefore Jesus Christ did not have a physical body. This was the heresy of Docetism. Augustine on the other hand, thought that the flesh, because of its desire, was sinful and that this sin is transmitted from parent to child through the sexual passions of intercourse. Yet Jesus, because he was born of a virgin, was born without this hereditary sin. Therefore, Augustine agreed with the Gnostics in principle, but he differed from them an explanation. Augustinian theology is really a Christianized Manicheanism or a semi-Gnosticism.

Let's summarize to this point:

1. All the early Christians before Augustine believed in man's free will as orthodox and denied the doctrine of natural inability as heresy.
2. The Pagans, Gnostics and philosophers, in those days, believed in fate and a necessitated will because man was created with a corrupted, sinful nature and denied the doctrine of free will.
3. Augustine was a Manichean Gnostic for nearly a decade before he converted to Christianity.
4. After joining the church, and being appointed a Bishop, Augustine defended the Doctrine of free will and later denied the doctrine of free will and began to re teach the natural inability of man.
5. The church under Augustine's influence established the doctrine of natural inability, which it never before but held and, prior to Augustine, they would argue against.

6. Augustine's Semi-Gnostic Theology is Propagated

While Augustine's views were not adopted by all the groups within Christendom such as the Anabaptist or the Eastern Orthodox churches, it was Augustine's view regarding human nature and free will that went beyond the Catholic Church into the Protestant realm. The greatest contributors to modern Western theology have been Augustine, Martin Luther and John Calvin. Luther was an Augustinian monk while Calvin was a lawyer, and the biographers of both admit the fact that Augustinian doctrine was strongly influential.

The mind of Augustine was influenced by Manichaeism and the minds of Luther and Calvin were influenced by Augustinian thought. Therefore, it's no surprise to see that as Augustine denied free will, Luther and Calvin denied free will also. Calvin focused on God's sovereignty while Luther focused on justification, but both drew heavily from Augustine and man's natural inability for the bondage of the will.

"Luther, Swingley, and Calvin, with minor divergences, agreeing the reverting to St. Augustine on the main issues and in the supposed interests of evangelical piety..."

The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol.10, P.232, Published by T&T Clark, 1919 Ed.

Luther referred to Augustine 13 times in *The Bondage of the Will*, and in the works of Martin Luther, Augustine is referred to 24 times; in *The Institutes of Christian Religion* by John Calvin, Augustine is referenced 265 times. Since Luther and Calvin were both students of Augustine and got their basic theology from him, it's not surprising to find remnants of Manichaeism in their writings.

"At the Reformation, Augustinianism received an emphatic reinforcement among the Protestant churches."

Methodist Quarterly Review, Vol.66, P.192, Published by J. Soule and T. Mason 1884 Ed.

"It is Augustine who gave us the Reformation. For the Reformation, inwardly considered, was just the ultimate triumph of Augustine's doctrine ... Reformation came, seeing that it was, on its theological side, a revival of Augustinianism..."

Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol.2, by James Hastings, John Alexander, Selbie Louis Herbert Gray, Published by T. & T. Clark, 1910 Ed., P.224

"In his teaching on total depravity and bondage of the will, Calvin is essentially following Augustine and Luther and not creating a so-called Calvinistic doctrine."

Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin*, P.132, Published by Westminster John Knox Press

a. Martin Luther (1483-1546)

"The study of the Bible and of Augustine's theology ... led [Martin Luther] to the Redeemer."

William Carlos Martin, *The Life and Times of Martin Luther*, P.58, Published by American Tract Society, 1866 Ed.

"Luther zealously studied the Bible, along with the writings of Augustine..."

Johann Heinrich Kurtz, *Text-Book of Church History*, Published by Lippincott, 1888 Ed, P.33

"...man has lost his freedom, and is forced to serve sin, and cannot will good ... he sins and wills evil necessarily ..."

Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, P.149, Translated by J.I. Packer & Johnston, Published by Revell, 1957 Ed.

"Sin as his nature and of himself he can do nothing but sin"

Martin Luther, *Faith and Freedom*, P.100, Published by Vintage Books

"Augustine ... is wholly on my side..."

Martin Luther, Martin Luther on the Bondage of The Will, P.69, Published by T. Bensley for W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1823 Ed.

b. John Calvin (1509-1564)

“They have not been ashamed to make use of a much more arrogant expression calling man ‘free agent’ or ‘self-manager’ just as if man had the power to govern himself...”

John Calvin, A Treatise on Predestination, Election, and Grace. Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical by Walter Arthur Copinger, P.320, Published by James Nisbet, 1889 Ed.

“As to the fathers (if their authority weighs with us) they have the term [free will] constantly in their mouths...”

John Calvin, Institutes of The Christian Religion, Vol.1, P.308, Published by Calvin Translation Society, 1845 Ed.

“The Greek fathers above others” have taught “the power of the human will.”

John Calvin, An Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism by John Fletcher, Vol.2 P.202, Published by Carlton & Porter

“The doctrine of predestination, which is generally regarded as that of which principally characterizes Calvin is in fact that of St. Augustine ...”

Thomas H Dyer, The Life of John Calvin, P.539, Published by John Murray, 1850 Ed.

“In theology he [Calvin] was a close follower of St. Augustine. His influence was to revivify the ideas of St. Augustine and, joining them to the main ideas of the Reformation, embody them in the church he organized.”

Oliver Joseph Thatcher, The Ideas That Have Influenced Civilization, P.140, Roberts-Manchester Publishing Co., 1901 Ed.

“Nature began to want liberty the moment the will was vanquished by the revolt into which it fell... by making a bad use of free will, [man] lost both himself and his will ... free will having been made a captive, can do nothing in the way of righteousness ... men at his creation received a great degree of free will, but lost it by sinning.”

John Calvin paraphrasing Augustine, The Institutes of Christian Religion, P.309, Published by Calvin Translation Society, 1845 Ed.

“Augustine, and Calvin, and all of the Reformers, taught the bondage, or moral impotence of the will.”

The Christian Spectator, Vol.7, P.270, Published by Howe & Spalding, 1825 Ed.

John Calvin paraphrasing Augustine, The Institutes of Christian Religion, P.355, Published by Calvin Translation Society, 1845 Ed.

“Lest I be charged with being opposed to all antiquity.”

“Let us hear Augustine in his own words,”

John Calvin, The Institutes of Christian Religion, P.308, Published by Calvin Translation Society, 1845 Ed.

“All ancient theologians with the exception of Augustine, are so confused, vacillating and contradictory on this subject, that no certainty can be obtained from their writings...”

John Calvin, The Institutes of Christian Religion, P.304, Published by Calvin Translation Society, 1845 Ed.

“It may perhaps seem that I have greatly prejudiced my own view by confessing that all the ecclesiastical writers, with the exception of Augustine, have spoken too ambiguously or inconsistently on this subject, that no certainty is attainable from their writings.”

John Calvin, The Institutes of Christian Religion, P.310, Published by Calvin Translation Society, 1845 Ed.

The reason that John Calvin rejected all ancient theologians and dismissed their writings on free will, except for Augustine, is because all ancient theologians taught the freedom of the will except for Augustine. Calvin was opposed to all of the early church fathers except Augustine when it came to the issue free will. While Calvin tried to say that he was not opposed to all antiquity when it came to free will, he meant that he was not opposed to Augustine. None of the ancient theologians were confused but spoke clearly that free will was innate to human nature from the beginning and not lost in the fall. Calvin tried to dismiss the charge of being opposed to the early church by starting his theology with Augustine and saying, “Augustine hesitated not to call the will a slave...”

“This in part explains why Calvin cannot cite anti-Nicene fathers against his libertarian opponents ... hence, when Calvin debates Pighuis on the freedom of the will, he cites Augustine abundantly, but no early church fathers are cited.”

Gregory Boyd, Satan and The Problem of Evil, P.360, Published by Intervarsity Press

“The peculiar tenets of Calvinism are in direct opposition to the doctrines maintained in the primitive Church of Christ.”

“There is a great similarity between the Calvinistic system and the earliest heresies...”

George Pretyman, A Refutation of Calvinism, P.571, Published by T. Cadell, 1823 Ed.

While other doctrines also seem to have originated within Gnosticism, no doctrine has spread so widely and with so much acceptance as the doctrine of man's natural inability to obey God. This doctrine has been taught by both Catholics and Protestants, and by both Armenians and Calvinists.

Building upon that foundation the direction of church history has been forever affected Augustine actually taught many false doctrines such as:

- a. Absolute prevenient grace
- b. Predestination
- c. Original sin
- d. Transmission of sin
- e. Infant damnation
- f. Infant baptismal regeneration
- g. Compelling conversion and persecuting heretics

Summary to this point:

1. Augustine's mind was greatly influenced by Manichean thought on the topic of free will and human nature and he clearly departed from the views of the early church.
2. The minds of Luther and Calvin were highly influenced by Augustinian thought and they admitted departing from the views of the early church.
3. Augustine, Luther, and Calvin are undeniably the greatest contributors to Western Christian theology

It is abundantly clear that Gnosticism or Manicheanism has come into the church and has permeated it with its views. The gnostic doctrine of the natural inability of man or the bondage of the will has crept into the church through a Trojan horse and has been masquerading as Christianity ever since. Gnostic views regarding human nature and free will have survived the centuries because Augustinianism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism has preserved and promoted, it is not taught in the Bible nor is it found in the earliest writings of the church fathers.

7. M.C. Hays 250919

“Start by assuming the proposition that God is capable of controlling everything that happens. For anything that God is capable of doing, either He must do it, or He simply may do it. If God must do something, then what is controlling God such that He cannot do differently? I don't think there's an answer that doesn't appeal to heresy, especially in this context. Alternatively, God may do that which He is capable; by definition, this means he may also not do it. Of relevance, God may control everything, or he may not, at His own choice. By scripture, we know simultaneously that it is God's will that all be saved and yet some will not be saved. The only way this isn't contradictory if God, through whatever mechanism, chooses not to control this outcome to proceed in accordance with His own will. I would argue God acting against His own will is not contradictory because He can have a higher will, in this case the will to relinquish control, which can supersede a lower will. We therefore have established by both logic and scriptural counterexample that God does not control everything that happens.

The most natural question is whether this requires a mechanism above God to which He must relinquish control; I do not believe this is necessary. We are made to bear God's image. As has been understood for millennia, this includes a mechanism called "free will," allowing humans to have a will and freely act on it. I propose that, like other components of God's image, free will has a similar scope, made lesser primarily by natural limitations, to God's own. I propose that God created this mechanism to relinquish partial control to humans and human will, while leaving us in a state that we could not ‘will’ the world out of existence no matter how much we wanted to. We live in a world which limits our ability to execute our will and a brain which informs our will, but ultimately, we can will whatever we want and can act on that will up to the extent we are physically capable. This ultimately leaves a mechanism lower than God that is still capable of receiving control, establishing that a higher mechanism is not required.”

One of the most fundamental questions is, "How does God know what he knows?"

Divine determinism assumes that God knows what he knows because he has predetermined history through His eternal, unchangeable decree. That kind of foreknowledge requires predetermination.

The reason God knows what he knows is that he decreed what will be.

This is called “meticulous divine control,” which has two opposing views.

See the Westminster Confession above on page 4.

The first view is called open theism, which says that God knows all things from the beginning to the end, starting at the beginning but His knowledge is based on His ability to calculate every possible outcome of every possible action. God doesn't actually “see” the future. God is not “looking forward” down the corridors of time but using foreknowledge.

It says that if you drive up to a stop sign, you can go right, left, or forward. God does not know in advance which you will do but can calculate a cause and effect relationship of the future for whichever path you take. This is considered heresy. It seems to be the opposing ditch to divine meticulous control.

The second view is a completely different answer to both of the above views. God is not looking forward down the corridors of time. God knows what he knows because he is outside of time and observes all things from beginning to end.

God has comprehensive knowledge of all things. There isn't anything that he does not already know.

This would be like “looking down” on a map of the world. God can see it all, for all time. Of course, God being in the spirit world isn't using the material dimensionality of “looking down” or “looking forward” like we think. God sees all and knows all. This is His Omnipresence and Omniscience. Now consider that God is capable of doing anything (Omnipotence), except to lie or be unfaithful. The question is NEVER about God's capability but His inclination. This inclination is always consistent with His nature and character. God is love, God is good, God is just, etc. Each is 100% all the time. People who don't know Him have all kinds of funny ideas.

Another of His fundamental attributes is that God is free. Since we are made in His image, we also share that attribute, scaled down as was said above. We, of necessity, must also be free.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

But God is so amazing in his Intellect and Power that he can accomplish Romans 8:28, in a way that is not manipulative. Control is contrary to God's nature.

Yes, it is God's will that none should perish (the doctrine of God's universal will to save), but we know many will, because it is their choice to reject His offer of redemption. To violate their Free Will by saving them against their will would be contradictory to God's own character. An untenable complication for the Calvinist is that since we know not everyone will be saved, and if it is God's universal will to save, then God's doesn't get His way, God's will is thwarted. In their minds this is a failure on God's part, that man's will should subvert God's will.

But this is precisely the Calvinist claim: God saves people, and they have nothing to do with their own Redemption, including the desire or will to be saved. Even to say "yes" to Jesus is considered "work."

Another complication, meticulous divine control makes God the author of evil. God has willed the motion of every molecule, every thought, every word, every deed, from beginning to end and it is unamendable, all that happens is God's will, Westminster Confession 1647, 1788. See above.

But evil, is the result of choices against God's truth and righteousness, directly and indirectly.

Directly, as human choices cause harm. Indirectly, the result of God's judgment on human evil. Like the condition of the earth following Noah's flood, and the Tower of Babel.

Part of God's Judgment from the Garden of Eden is that every living thing is now dying. Man's defiant behavior, i.e. sin, has brought the Judgment of God and as God said, death. It has happened in two parts: they were separated from God's lifegiving presence and relocated from a perfect environment to an environment in which every living thing is now dying. Death will be the last enemy to be destroyed, First Corinthians 15:25-25, Revelation 20:14. Praise God that the presence of God has been restored to us. The environmental problem will be fixed in the New Earth, where death is no more.

So, the underlying question concerning "God is in control" has to do with how God knows what he knows.

Control asserts a corruption in God's nature and makes him the root of all evil. This is also precisely the god of the Gnostics. It is not a coincidence that the god of the Gnostics created the physical universe evil and has enslaved mankind in that evil universe.

This makes evil a substance, not a behavior. Evil is what we are, commonly called the "sin nature" today.

From this comes the heresy that Jesus could not have been human. He just had the appearance (Docetism) of being human. So, Jesus didn't really die on the cross, because Divine beings can't die.

As we saw before, sin is not a substance that is passed on sexually, rather it is behavioral.

Liberty is contradictory to everything that is promoted about God's absolute sovereignty and control.

Liberty and control are opposing forces. They are completely different ways of doing things.

Similar for God's love.

No Calvinist can live consistently with his Calvinism. Why do they get upset when people disagree with them. If Calvinism is true, why pray, why do missions, God has foreordained all that happens, outcomes to prayer, salvation of individuals, wars, inventions, everything, including my objections and this paper.

"...if God's moral judgement differs from ours so that our 'black' may be His 'white', we can mean nothing by calling Him good; for to say 'God is good', while asserting that His goodness is wholly other than ours, is really only to say 'God is we know not what'. And an utterly unknown quality in God cannot give us moral grounds for loving or obeying Him. If He is not (in our sense) 'good' we shall obey, if at

all, only through fear - and should be equally ready to obey an omnipotent Fiend. The doctrine of Total Depravity - when the consequence is drawn that, since we are totally depraved, our idea of good is worth simply nothing - may thus turn Christianity into a form of devil-worship."
-CS. Lewis - The Problem Of Pain, P.28-30

8. Summary

Key Gnostic/Augustinian/Calvinist Presuppositions

- a. The creation is not just fallen it is evil, as is the matter of which it is made.
- b. God is absolutely sovereign. God always gets His way. (How does this happen?)
- c. Absolute sovereignty means meticulous divine control, divine determinism, predestination, preordination. Sovereignty is causation. God is the agent of total divine causality for everything that happens. God cannot win unless He has absolute control over every circumstance and event in history. "No rogue molecules," R.C. Sproul.
To allow genuine free will would mean chaos to God's plans.
- d. Total Depravity and Original Sin negate free will. This is also by divine determinism.

The most basic question is this: In his natural state, is man able to live up to God's moral standards? All the church fathers, up to Augustine, said 'Yes.' Anyone that disagreed with Augustine became an heretic.

"No rogue molecules," R.C. Sproul. It is true for the material universe that the laws of physics and chemistry govern all that happens. There are no rogue molecules. But these laws are not causal, they are descriptions of what will happen based on a set of initial conditions. If absolute sovereignty is true, then man is no different than controlled molecules in motion, which is also the implication of atheist materialism. Divine determinism is no different than atheistic determinism. But Dr. Sproul and others seem confused and imply human agency is no different than natural law. Absolutely everything that happens in the universe is predetermined, matter and mind. But they cannot live consistently with their system.

"The free will and natural ability of man were held by the whole church ... natural inability was to that of the Pagan philosophers, the Gnostics. and the Manicheans."

Lyman Beecher, Views in Theology, P.36, Published by Truman and Smith, 1836 Ed.

"The Manicheans so denied free will as to hold a fatal necessity of sinning..."

W.F. Hook, A Church Dictionary, P.279, Published by John Murry, 1852 Ed.

"In the year in which he read the scriptures and was disappointed in them, Augustine joined the Manichean sect..." P.XXI

"For nearly nine years Augustine was a Manichean auditor." P.XXXII

John Gibb and William Montgomery, Introduction to the Confessions of Augustine, University Press, 1908

"The two great intellectual influences upon Augustine prior to his conversion were Manichaeism and Greek philosophy (Neoplatonism, in particular)."

John K Ryan, Introduction to the Confessions of Saint Augustine, P.23, Random House, Inc. 1960.

"Free choice of the will was present in that man who was the first to be formed ... but after he sinned by that free will, we who have descended from his progeny have been plunged into necessity."

Augustine, Augustine, Manichaeism, and The Good by Kam-Lun E. Lee, Published by Dissertation.com, P.122

"By Adam's transgression, the freedom of the human will has been completely lost."

Augustine, An Historical Presentation of Augustinianism and Pelagianism From The Original Sources by G.F. Wiggers, P.332, 1840 Ed.

We also learned that all of the early Christian fathers, before Augustine, believed in the freedom of man's will and that man had a choice between obedience and disobedience

“If God had not put it in the power of this people either to obey or disobey; if they had not had a free will, over which they had complete authority, to use it either in the way of willing or nilling; could God, with any propriety, have given such precepts as these, sanction with such promises and threatenings? If they were not free agents, they could not be punished for disobedience, nor could they, in any sense of the word have been rewardable for obedience.”

Adam Clark (1762-1832), Commentary on Deuteronomy 11:26, ~1800AD

“This doctrine is a stumbling-block both to the church and the world, infinitely dishonorable to God, and an abomination alike to God and the human intellect, and should be banished from every pulpit, and from every formula of doctrine, and from the world. It is a relic of heathen philosophy, and was foisted in among the doctrines of Christianity by Augustine, as everyone may know who will take the trouble to examine for himself.”

Charles Finney, Lectures on Systemic Theology, P.340, 1851 Ed., Published by BRCCD

“The Calvinist insists that an absolutely sovereign God must Himself determine how creatures would act in various circumstances. So, God unilaterally determines to create these creatures and these circumstances, and He determines what they will do in those circumstances. So that everything is foreordained and predestined by a kind of unilateral divine determinism, which is incompatible with libertarian free will.”

William Lane Craig, Molinism & Calvinism: What's the Difference?

“What is plainer than that the ancient divines, for 300 years after Christ, those at least who flourished before St. Augustine maintained the liberty of our will, or an indifference of two contrary things, free from all internal and external necessity.”

Episcopus, An Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism by John Fletcher, Vol.2 P.209, Published by Carlton & Porter

“All the fathers ... agreed with the Pelagians, in attributing freedom of will to man in his present state.”

G.F. Wiggers, An Historical Presentation of Augustinianism and Pelagianism From The Original Sources by G.F. Wiggers, P.392, 1840 Ed.

We have also seen that the Reformation was a revival of Augustinian doctrine such that Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and other reformers reapplied the doctrine of man's natural inability which became a doctrine of Reformed Theology, while denying the freedom of man's will. Remember, Martin Luther was a monk of the Augustinian order and would have been intimate with Augustine's teachings.

“Luther zealously studied the Bible, along with the writings of Augustine...”

Johann Heinrich Kurtz, Text-Book of Church History, Published by Lippincott, 1888 Ed, P.33

“In theology, he [Calvin] was a close follower of St. Augustine. His influence was to revivify the ideas of St. Augustine and, joining them to the main ideas of the Reformation, embody them in the church he organized.”

Oliver Joseph Thatcher, The Ideas That Have Influenced Civilization, Roberts-Manchester Publishing Co., 1901 Ed., P.140.

“It is Augustine who gave us the Reformation. For the Reformation, inwardly considered, was just the ultimate triumph of Augustine's doctrine ... Reformation came, seeing that it was, on its theological side, a revival of Augustinianism...”

Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol.2, P.224, by James Hastings, John Alexander, Selbie Louis Herbert Gray, Published by T. & T. Clark, 1910 Ed.

“Augustine, and Calvin, and all of the Reformers, taught the bondage, or moral impotence of the will.”
The Christian Spectator, Vol.7, P.270, Published by Howe & Spalding, 1825 Ed.

It doesn't take much to see the historical truth that Augustine brought Christianized Manichean/Gnostic ideas into the church, and Manichean Christianity was further propagated by Luther, Calvin and other reformers. It is an historical fact that the doctrine of man's natural inability did not originate in early Christianity but originated in Gnosticism. The doctrine of free will was the historically orthodox Christian doctrine, while the doctrine of man's natural inability was historically antithetical to free will and apostolic doctrine.

9. What must I do to be saved?

Acts 16:29-31

29 Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, **what must I do to be saved?**” 31 So they said, “**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved**, you and your household.”

Romans 10:8-13

8 But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): 9 that **if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved**. 10 For **with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation**. 11 For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” 12 For there is **no distinction between Jew and Greek**, for the same Lord over all is **rich to all who call upon Him**. 13 For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

Hebrews 4:1-3

1 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed **the gospel was preached to us as well as to them**; but the word which they heard did not profit them, **not being mixed with faith in those who heard it**. 3 For we who **have believed do enter that rest...**

Acts 2:37-38

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” 38 Then Peter said to them, “**Repent**, and let every one of you be **baptized in the name of Jesus Christ** for the remission of sins; and **you shall receive** the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 2:8-10

8 For by **grace you have been saved through faith**, and that not of yourselves; **it is the gift of God**, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which **God prepared beforehand** that we should walk in them.

10. References

Dr. Leighton Flowers, Soteriology 101

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wBteVBnVYQ>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGdRQSPyjf8>
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Divine Determinism
Divine Determinism
Augustine
Augustine
Regeneration Precedes Faith
Same vocabulary, different dictionary

Leighton Flowers interviews Augustinian scholar Dr. Ken Wilson.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BnOMORGM2Qw>

The Myth of Pelagianism - An Interview with Dr. Ali Bonner.

This is an historical rather than a theological analysis but contains important details.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAMAYi1cjZw>
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Dr. Ken Winson – The Foundation of Augustinian-Calvinism

<https://www.amazon.com/Foundation-Augustinian-Calvinism-Ken-Wilson/dp/108280035X/>

Dr. Ali Bonner – The Myth of Pelagianism

<https://www.amazon.com/Myth-Pelagianism-British-Academy-Monographs/dp/0197266398/>

Rowan Greer – The Fear of Freedom

<https://www.amazon.com/Fear-Freedom-Miracles-Imperial-Church/dp/027100648X/>

Arminius “Liberty of Indifference” Dr. Daniel Whitby “made moral agency impossible, men became self-caused gods, while making God irrelevant.” choice is like a balance, it could go either way.

“Choosing w/o any determining reference.” = Arminian definition of free will.

J Edwards – “Freedom of the Will - 1754”

“If God controls everything, how are my choices real? If I can’t choose otherwise, how am I responsible?”

“If the Arminians are right then God’s sovereignty is an illusion.”

Hello, my name is Ethan Kaiser. I am a scientist and an atheist ... and my question is, "How do you have, according to the Bible, how do we have free will if God is this omniscient Being that knows everything about us, everything we will do, and he pretty much knows our outcome before He even created, so he creates us knowing everything we'll do. Since we can't surprise him by our actions, we are in, we have no free will, **our choices have been predetermined**, and that the act of judgment is completely immoral because he knows what we're going to do, nothing can surprise Him?

Ravi Zacharias – Atheist scientist's challenge.

Note the Calvinist presuppositions in the question.