



Saturday, August 17, 2013 Zapping-you Whenever Thoughts Flow

## Free will and the judgments of God

Once we realize judgment isn't punishment, we can let God be sovereign.

---

### FROM A READER:

**M**artin,  
I love your writings, and am thrilled that you are spreading this glorious and wonderful gospel that Christ has come to reconcile all to Himself.

I am interested in your views on free will. I totally believe in the reconciliation of all but am a bit confused about some of your logic with relation to free will.

Firstly, even in general life I would argue there is no absolute free will because all the decisions are determined by so many external factors. However, I hold that there is an element of free will. I agree that no one can come to the Father unless the Father draws him. My understanding is that God is drawing all. The will of man will not ultimately affect the will of God, but the fact that through a myriad of reasons people either do not understand or even hear the Gospel can stop them coming into life right now. God in his sovereignty gives this measure of free will. I understand your viewpoint, but something seems logically to not add up.

Look, you have said yourself that it would be better to leave the unbeliever in their ignorance than teach



them the evil teaching that God tortures people for eternity, but then you say that anyone who has come to Christ has been foreordained to come to Christ in the sovereignty of God. So have they been foreordained to hear a lying and deceptive gospel? I do not think so. So are we supposed to believe that the people in the apostate church all around us are the called-out ones? And then why would God choose to not elect people from whole nations who have not heard

the Gospel (or who have heard a perverted form of the Gospel)?

You have also said that those who do not believe in this life are robbed of eonian life. Therefore, they will be punished (though not for eternity). But why should they be punished for something they cannot do any-

## **It is really like saying God will send people to age-lasting punishment just for being disabled.**

thing about? If they are not chosen, then they are stuck with being sinners and so cannot escape the Lake of Fire. (I recognize that you do not see this as an eternal state.) It is really like saying that God will send people to age-lasting punishment just for being disabled. They cannot help being disabled and can do nothing about it, but God punishes them for it anyway.

This is how I see it now. I am open to correction:

- ▶ Yes, I believe all will be made alive in Christ.
- ▶ I believe the Father is drawing all to Him.
- ▶ I believe not everyone responds to God due to a myriad of reasons—upbringing and many other things.
- ▶ I believe God chose those whom He knew would respond to a pure gospel.
- ▶ I believe many will go into eonian correction and refinement (not punishment for sin), because the price of sin has already been paid and our salvation has already been purchased full and complete.
- ▶ I believe salvation is by grace, through faith. Salvation is not by the work of faith.

I became a Christian in 1978 but I have only known the true gospel for three years. I am totally thrilled with discovering this glorious truth, which is the gospel. I cannot believe I ever missed it.

Thank you for everything.



### **MY RESPONSE:**

**T**hanks for the great letter. Yours is an easy and sincere spirit.

There is no element of free will in the universe. We do not have a “limited free will,” as I’ve heard some teach. Limited free will is a contradiction of terms. To

be limited is to be restricted, and to be free is to be unrestricted. I now ask: What is unrestricted restriction? I’ll tell you what it is: it’s impossibility.

It is only in those places in Scripture where humans are exhorted to make decisions that the thought of freedom comes in. But it does not logically follow that just because God exhorts us to do things, we have the ability to do them, “for it is God operating in you to will as well as to work for the sake of His delight” (Philippians 2:13).

Here’s another good verse: “A man’s steps are ordered by the Lord” (Psalm 37:23). Steps are the smallest of things. And this: “In Him we are living and moving and are” (Acts 17:28). Note the progressive restriction of human will.

### **The Author of all reasons**

You seem to go against your own ideas of a limited free will by saying there are a myriad of reasons people either do or do not understand or even hear the gospel. Who is the Author of all these reasons? God is. Apart from Him, nothing can exist.

You write: “God in his sovereignty gives this measure of free will.” You do not have a Scripture for this, and will never find one. I have a Scripture saying the opposite. Romans 12:3—“God parts to each the measure of faith.” It is a measure of faith God gives us, not a measure of free will to drum up faith. Additionally, it is not that God chooses those He knows will respond, as you suggest. Rather, He *causes* people to respond.

I’m happy you are open to correction. You are a mature believer. I know you don’t want to hold to anything opposing God’s thoughts on any matter. God’s thoughts on the matter are this: “He is operating all in accord with the counsel of His own will” (Ephesians 1:11). What is to be excepted from that “all”?

## Foreordained to hear a lying gospel

*“So have they been foreordained to hear a lying and deceptive gospel? I do not think so.”* But it is true. People are foreordained to hear a lying and deceptive gospel. Why should this be so hard to believe in light of a verse like Romans 9:18, that “whom God will, He is hardening?” Or have you not also read in 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 that God Himself “will be sending them an operation of deception, for them to believe the falsehood.” God does indeed raise up deceptions, and then causes people to believe them. Why? So that His purposes may be fulfilled. In this eon, in order to demonstrate His vast love and mercy and grace, God requires both vessels of honor and dishonor. That vessels of dishonor are also saved for eternity spares God of any potential wrongdoing or unrighteousness in so dealing with these people.

## Are Christians in the body of Christ?

*“So are we supposed to believe that the people in the apostate church all around us are the called-out ones?”*

No. The nominal Christian church is false. Its teachings are false. Those who embrace their teachings are also false. They have a form of devoutness but deny the power of God (2 Timothy 3:5). They are forever learning, but never realizing truth (2 Timothy 3:7). Called-out ones are members of the body of Christ. Members of the body of Christ will be found believing truth, not lies.

## Unbelievers

*“And then why would God choose to not elect people from whole nations who have not heard the gospel, or a perverted form of the gospel?”*

Because He needs vessels of dishonor to effect His purposes. He needs unbelievers as a black backdrop against which those given faith will shine. They will not be unbelievers forever.

## Punishment vs. judgment

*“You have also said that those who do not believe in this life are robbed of eonian life. Therefore they will be punished (though not for eternity). But why should they be punished for something they cannot do anything about.”*

They are not punished, they are judged. Judgment is a setting right, and will be for the benefit of the one judged. The question you ask—“Why should they be punished for something they cannot do anything about?”—is nearly word-for-word the question of the objector of Romans 9:19-20:

**You will be protesting to me: “Why is He still blaming? For who has withstood His intention?”  
O man! Who are you who are answering to God?”**

## We are all disabled

*“It is really like saying that God will send people to age-lasting punishment just for being disabled. They cannot help being disabled and can do nothing about it, but God punishes them for it anyway.”*

Again, you mistake punishment for judgment. Punishment merely satisfies the inflictor, while judgment is remedial, working toward its object’s reform. Now wake up and smell this coffee: *We’re all disabled!* We were all disabled in Adam. We all suffer for something we didn’t do. But we’re learning about God



through it, so don’t complain. If you’re going to complain about mortality for the disabled, you’re going to have to complain about immortality for the same group. Why? Both mortality and immortality come to disabled beings, namely, us.

I empathize with you in your trials, which I omitted printing to protect your privacy. You can be thankful for these difficulties because they have brought you to the truth. It is a good trade-off. Those being judged by God at the great white throne will say the same thing about their trials. They are no more responsible for their trials than you are for yours. Judgment is not a matter of “who is responsible for getting me into this mess,” but rather God using the “mess” to teach humanity His wisdom, grace and love.

Keep the faith, brother. You care about truth. The same cannot be said of many. Yours in grace,

—Martin





## SOMETHING IS HAPPENING IN FAITH.

PEOPLE ARE COMING FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY TO FIND OUT WHAT.

This conference is going to be an event you do not want to miss. Folks are coming in from Virginia, Maryland, Alabama, Illinois, Indiana, Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and other states.

September 14-15 (Saturday-Sunday)  
**The Potter's House Fellowship**  
**108 Main St. Faith, NC, 28041**  
<http://www.thepottershousfellowship.com/>

Dan Sheridan, Martin Zender, Waylan Dabbs,  
 Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

### **HOTELS:**

(We have special rates here.)  
 Hotel Salisbury- formerly Holiday Inn  
 530 Jake Alexander Blvd.  
 Salisbury NC, 28147  
 Reservations 704-637-3100  
 (Group code: BIB -this code will  
 discount the rooms to \$89.99 a night;  
 includes a breakfast buffet.)

**Days Inn**  
 321 Bendix Drive  
 Salisbury NC, 28144

**Comfort Suites**  
 1040 East Innes St.  
 Salisbury NC, 28144

**CONTACT:**  
 Alan Hess (704-213-7950)

OR JUST SHOW UP.

Blog links:

[http://www.zenderville.blogspot.com/2013\\_02\\_12\\_archive.html](http://www.zenderville.blogspot.com/2013_02_12_archive.html)

<http://www.zenderville.blogspot.com/2013/02/tuesday-night-faith-meeting.html>

**SEE YOU THERE!**

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

[http://archive.aweber.com/martin-zender/6Efwo/h/September\\_14\\_15\\_Meetings\\_in.htm](http://archive.aweber.com/martin-zender/6Efwo/h/September_14_15_Meetings_in.htm)