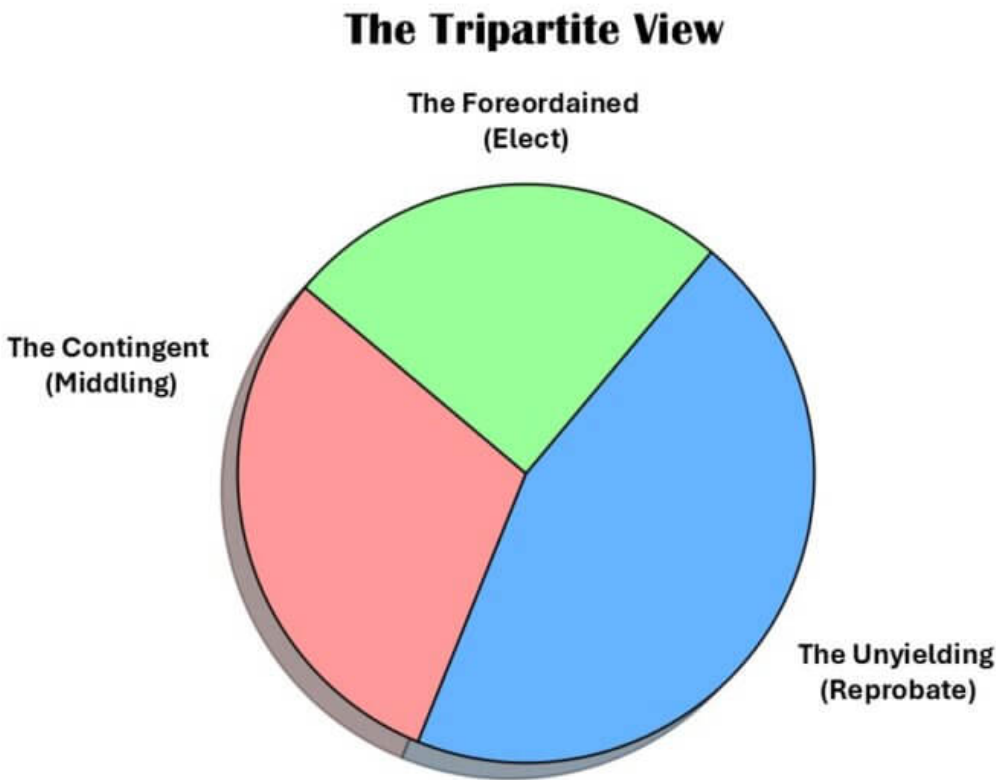


Argument Against “Double Predestination” and Support for the Tripartite View

written by Alfred Persson | November 11, 2024



Clarified and Strengthened Argument Against “Double Predestination” and Support for the Tripartite View

Many theologians reject the Calvinist doctrine of “Double Predestination,” which asserts that God has predestined some individuals to salvation (the Elect) and others to condemnation (the Reprobate). These theologians emphasize that scripture affirms God’s desire for all people to be saved (1 Timothy 2:3-4) and for “everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9), suggesting that salvation is not limited to a preselected group. Despite these clear passages, committed Calvinists often interpret them in a way that aligns with their doctrine of limited atonement and unconditional election, asserting that these texts do not conflict with double predestination.

Centuries of theological debate have failed to definitively challenge the entrenched doctrine of double predestination. However, this doctrine rests on an “unsound inference”: the idea that humanity is divided solely into two groups—the Elect and the Reprobate. This inference is not an explicit biblical statement. A closer look at scripture, supported by early Jewish teachings, suggests a more nuanced Tripartite View that divides humanity into three distinct categories:

- The Foreordained (Elect)** – Those predestined for salvation (Romans 8:29-30).
- The Contingent (Middling)** – Those whose final status depends on their response to God’s grace (Titus 2:11; Romans 2:6-7).

3. **The Unyielding (Reprobate)** – Those who persist in rejection and disobedience (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Romans 1:21-24).

Historical and Scriptural Roots of the Tripartite View

The Tripartite View has strong support not only in Christian scripture but also in early Jewish teachings, specifically from the **School of Hillel**, which influenced the Apostle Paul (Acts 22:3; 23:6). This school taught a view of humanity divided into the **Righteous, Middling, and Wicked**, as documented in the **Babylonian Talmud**:

Rabbinic Teaching (Babylonian Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 16b-17a):

- **Three books are opened by God on the New Year:** one for the thoroughly righteous, one for the thoroughly wicked, and one for the middling.
- The **righteous** are immediately inscribed for life.
- The **wicked** are immediately inscribed for death.
- The **middling** are left in suspense from New Year until the Day of Atonement, when their fate is determined based on their deeds.

Rabbi Abin supports this view using **Psalms 69:28**: “Let them be blotted out of the book of the living. Let them not be inscribed among the righteous.” His reasoning:

- The **thoroughly righteous** are inscribed in the Book of Life.
- The **middling** have their status determined based on their merit.
- Those who are not inscribed among the righteous are consigned to the Book of the Wicked.

Scriptural Support for the Tripartite View

1. The Fulness Obtain Salvation after the Elect

- **Romans 11:7, 12, 25-26** show the Jewish and Gentile “Fulness” obtain salvation after the Elect and together all these add up to the full number of those saved, “All Israel”.

2. The Existence of Names that can be blotted out of the Book of Life (Revelation 3:5)

- **Revelation 3:5** reveals he who overcomes will not have his name blotted out of the Book of Life. As the Names of the Elect can never be blotted out this implies the existence of People whose fate is not predetermined and can change according to their works, the Righteous and the Unrighteous.

3. The Existence of Books for Different Groups (Revelation 20:11-15)

- **Revelation 20:12-15** describes the final judgment where multiple books are opened, and the dead are judged by their deeds. The Book of Life, containing the names of the elect, is contrasted with other records. Those not found in the Book of Life are cast into the lake of fire, implying the existence of a record for those whose names are blotted out or excluded due to unrepentance.

4. The Foreordained (Romans 8:29-30)

- “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son...”
- This supports the idea of a group that is chosen and predestined for salvation from the foundation of the world.

5. The Contingent (Titus 2:11; Romans 2:6-7)

- **Titus 2:11**: “For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.”
- **Romans 2:6-7**: “God ‘will repay each person according to what they have done.’ To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality, he will give eternal life.”
- These verses support the notion that individuals can move toward salvation based on their response to God’s grace, highlighting the potential of the Middling to become righteous.

6. The Unyielding (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Romans 1:21-24)

- **2 Thessalonians 2:10-12**: “They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved...so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.”
- **Romans 1:21-24**: Describes those who, although aware of God, chose not to honor Him, leading God to “give them up” to their desires.
- These passages depict the Unyielding as those who resist and reject divine truth persistently, sealing their fate.

Scriptural and Historical Proofs of the Middling Group

Malachi 3:16-18 affirms a group that stands between the thoroughly righteous and the wicked:

- “Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD...”
- This “book of remembrance” suggests a group whose fate depends on their deeds and devotion.

Conclusion

The **Tripartite View** of humanity is rooted in scripture and early Jewish teachings, revealing that:

- **The Foreordained (Elect)** are those chosen for salvation from the beginning.
- **The Contingent (Middling)** are those whose ultimate destiny depends on their response to God's grace and their actions.
- **The Unyielding (Wicked)** are those who persistently reject God's truth and face condemnation.

This view disproves the binary construct of double predestination making reprobation the corollary of predestination. The Tripartite construct taught in scripture reveals a more nuanced understanding, one where God's desire for all to come to repentance (1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9) can be actualized and the potential for change in the Middling according to their own Free Will choice is acknowledged. It maintains the integrity of scripture while providing a deeper, more comprehensive approach to divine judgment and human freedom.

God so loved the World even John Calvin can be saved if he believes

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“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (Jn. 3:16 NKJ)

The opportunity to be saved by Jesus is universally offered to “whosoever believes”, but against this Calvin argued “world” refers to all groups of people and the elect among them are the only ones who will believe and be saved.

Conclusion: Calvinists are wrong because:

1. Limiting *kosmos* to the elect contradicts the plain and repeated use of *kosmos* in John 3:16-19, which clearly indicates an inclusive, universal scope.
2. The phrase “whoever believes” in John 3:16 supports an open invitation to all humanity, not just the elect.
3. 1 John 2:2 explicitly states that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the entire world (*holos kosmos*), which cannot be limited to the elect without ignoring the clear textual emphasis on universality.
4. The context of condemnation and salvation described in John 3:18-19 applies universally, implying that the *kosmos* receiving the light includes all people, even those who reject it.
5. Christ’s universal proclamation to the living and the dead (1 Peter 3:18-22, Ephesians 4:9-10) further supports that His mission and the reach of His light are not restricted to an exclusive group but extend to all humanity.

Final Conclusion: The Calvinist interpretation that limits *kosmos* in these passages to only the elect fails to align with the clear, repeated, and contextually consistent use of the term in Scripture. The natural reading of *kosmos* in John 3:16-19 and 1 John 2:2 supports a universal understanding that includes all of humanity, affirming that Christ’s atoning work and the offer of salvation are genuinely extended to all.

Notes:

The Meaning of *Kosmos* in John 3:16-19 and 1 John 2:2

Premise 1: In John 3:16, *kosmos* (world) is used to convey that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Premise 2: In John 3:17, the purpose of sending Jesus is stated: “God did not send His Son into the world (*kosmos*) to condemn the world (*kosmos*), but that the world (*kosmos*) through Him might be saved.” The repetition of *kosmos* indicates a consistent meaning throughout the passage.

Premise 3: John 3:18 states, “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” This implies that the opportunity for belief and condemnation applies universally within the *kosmos*.

Premise 4: John 3:19 reinforces the universal application by stating, “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world (*kosmos*), and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” The phrase “light has come into the world” confirms that Christ’s light reaches the entirety of the *kosmos*.

Premise 5: The repeated use of *kosmos* in John 3:16-19 suggests that the

author is emphasizing a comprehensive meaning, analogous to metaphors like “the four corners of the earth” (Isaiah 11:12) or “east, west, north, and south” (Luke 13:29), which are used to indicate the entire world.

Premise 6: In 1 John 2:2, it is stated, “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole (*holos*) world (*kosmos*).” The addition of *holos* underscores that Christ’s atoning work applies to all of humanity and not only a specific group (e.g., the elect).

Premise 7: The idea that Christ’s light shines universally is further supported by 1 Peter 3:18-22 and 4:5-6, where it is implied that the gospel is proclaimed to all, including the dead. Ephesians 4:9-10 also supports this by stating that Christ descended to the “lower parts of the earth” to ensure no realm of human existence was left out.

Premise 8: If *kosmos* were meant to refer only to the elect, the repeated emphasis on universal terminology in John 3:16-19 and 1 John 2:2 would be misleading. The use of “whoever believes” in John 3:16 reinforces the open nature of the invitation.

Conclusion: The consistent use of *kosmos* throughout these passages, along with the additional support from metaphors and theological affirmations of universality, indicates that *kosmos* refers to the whole of humanity, not just the elect. Therefore, the distinction between “ours [the elect]” and “the whole *kosmos* of humanity” is unsustainable in this context. Christ is the propitiation for the entire world, providing the opportunity for salvation to all who choose to believe.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God

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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.

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Rom. 8:28-31 NKJ)

Premises:

1. **Omniscience of God:** God possesses complete and infinite knowledge of all possible realities and outcomes, encompassing every potential state of existence (“fallen” and “unfallen” realms).
2. **Distinct Act of Foreknowledge:** While omniscience is God’s all-encompassing knowledge, *foreknowledge* is a specific application or aspect of His omniscience. In this act of foreknowledge, God

identifies and recognizes those individuals who would willingly respond to His love and maintain a faithful relationship with Him upon “awakening” into existence in an unfallen state.

3. **Recognition of the Loving in the Unfallen Realm:** God, in His foreknowledge, perceived which individuals would choose to love and remain committed to Him when they came into existence without the influence of a fallen nature.
4. **Election Based on Foreknowledge:** God, having foreknown these individuals as loving Him in the unfallen realm, then *elected* this select group to be predestined for a specific purpose. This purpose is to be conformed to the image of His Son, thus initiating their eventual justification and glorification.
5. **Predestination Without Reprobation:** God’s act of predestining those He foreknew does not imply reprobation for others. Those not foreknown as loving Him are simply not part of this predestination process, highlighting the absence of any active decision to reprobate them.
6. **Sequential Process of Salvation:** Those whom God foreknew and elected are subsequently predestined to be conformed to Christ’s image, called by God, justified through faith, and ultimately glorified in His presence.

Logical Conclusion:

- **Foreknowledge and Predestination as Related but Separate Acts:** God’s omniscience is a broad, comprehensive state, while His foreknowledge is a focused, deliberate recognition within omniscience, aimed at identifying those who would love Him. In a subsequent and distinct act, God predestines these individuals to follow a path that includes being called, justified, and glorified, ensuring their full salvation.
- **Exclusion of Reprobation:** The passage and the logic behind these premises imply that those not foreknown as loving God are absent from the predestination process. This underscores that reprobation is not part of the divine action described in Romans 8:28-30.

Summary:

God’s omniscience allowed Him to know all possible realities, including who would willingly return His love when they awoke into existence in an unfallen state. This knowledge formed the basis for His act of foreknowledge, wherein He selected those individuals who loved Him and predestined them to be conformed to the image of His Son, ensuring their salvation journey through calling, justification, and glorification. The absence of those not foreknown indicates that God’s predestination does not include or imply reprobation.

What if the Bible Teaches Both Predestination and Free Will?

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What if the Bible Teaches Both Predestination and Free Will?

Scripture says divine election is conditioned “according to the foreknowledge of God” (1 Pt. 1:2):

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. (1 Pet. 1:2 KJV)

Scripture also says divine election was not conditioned according to works either good or evil the Elect do:

*For the children being not yet born, **neither having done any good or evil**, that the purpose of God according to **election might stand, not of works**, but of him that calleth. (Rom. 9:11 KJV)*

The apparent contradiction has caused controversy in the Church. John Calvin cited Paul to propose Election was by Sovereign choice and not based upon foreknowledge at all, while Jacob Arminius cited Peter to propose Election is conditioned on foreknowledge of “foreseen faith”. Both assume only two classes of people exist, the Righteous and the Unrighteous. Suppose they are wrong, suppose three classes exist: “The Righteous+The Wicked+The Middling People”?

For example, everyone assumes there are only two classes of people in this context (Mt. 25:31-46)

“And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (Matt. 25:46 NKJ)

Actually, Christ points to a third called: “My Brethren”

“And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’ (Matt. 25:40 NKJ)

Paul hints there is a “third class” of People in Romans 11:5-32, who when added to the Elect become Israel’s “fullness”:

5 Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

6 And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

7 What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

8 Just as it is written: “God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day.”

9 And David says: “Let their table become a snare and a trap, A stumbling block and a recompense to them.

10 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, and bow down their back always.”

11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.

12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!(Rom. 11:5-12 NKJ)

In Revelation 3:15-16 Christ criticizes those who could be categorized as “middling people” who are neither cold or hot:

15 *“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.*

16 *“So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. (Rev. 3:15-16 NKJ)*

James warns against being “double minded” who might not receive salvation from the LORD, something that could be said only about those whose fate is undetermined:

6 *But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.*

7 *For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;*

8 *he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (Jas. 1:6-8 NKJ)*

Lets assume the School of Hillel (Gamaliel, Paul the apostle Acts 22:3) is correct, that three classes of people exist on Judgment Day, which is confirmed in the book of Revelation when the “book of life” is opened so names could be written into it (Rev. 20:12) :

[I.15 A] Said R. Kruspedai said R. Yohanan, “Three books are opened [by God] on the New Year: one for the thoroughly wicked, one for the thoroughly righteous, and one for middling [people].

“The thoroughly righteous immediately are inscribed and sealed for [continued] life.

[C] “The thoroughly wicked immediately are inscribed and sealed for death.

[D] “Middling [people] are left hanging from New Year until the Day of Atonement.

[E] “If they [are found to have] merit, they are inscribed for life.

[F] “If they [are found] not [to have] merit, they are inscribed for death.”

[G] Said R. Abin, “What is the Scriptural [foundation for this]? [Ps. 69:28 states]: ‘Let them be blotted out of the book of the living. Let them not be inscribed among the righteous.’ ‘Let them be blotted out of the book’-this refers to the book of the thoroughly wicked. ‘[... of the] living’-this refers to the book of the righteous. ‘Let them not be inscribed among the righteous’-this refers to the book of middling [people].”-Neusner, J. (2011). The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary (Vol. 6b, p. 83). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.

Rabbi Abin relies on unstated implications: “Let them be blotted out” implies the Book of the Thoroughly Wicked because the action is ongoing, they will never repent. “Book of the Living” lists the names of the Thoroughly Righteous. “Inscribed among the righteous” implies the Book of the Middling.

If this construct of three classes is correct, then both Arminius and Calvin were partly right. Both Predestination and Free Will are taught in

scripture. Its a matter of perspective, the texts that seem to contradict one of the possitions taken, actually apply to the “middling people”.

Another way we can resolve the paradox is to infer what it was God foreknew. Then the paradox vanishes. Before the foundation of the world it follows Omniscient God had two versions of Creation in view, the “Unfallen Version” which existed only in the Mind of God, and the “Fallen Version” that actually came into existence.

If God elects according to “a condition” foreknown in the “unfallen version” (which never comes into existence), Election would be according to God’s Sovereign “good purpose and will” and free of any hint of unfairness even though it is not based upon any works of good or evil the Elect do in this life.

Before God created, in His Omniscience He experiences everyone who would come into existence, some respond to His love with love, others with hate. The “children of God” and the “children of the Devil” were fully known.

God skipped over the children of the Devil. By a special act of “foreknowledge”, God “knew before” all those who loved Him like “highlighted text” is known before surrounding dark text. And God loved them even more (cp. Rom. 11:2). [2] Therefore, before they did anything good or bad God predestined those He foreknew loved Him unto salvation, regardless what their “fallen versions” do in this fallen realm.

This is not Molinism. His view depended on the existence of “Middle Knowledge”, this view is founded in God’s “Natural Knowledge” which no one objects to.

God Omnisciently knows what every unfallen individual human would do in a particular set of circumstances, where they came to into existence knowing fully God’s love for them, and His Person. Those who responded to God’s love and Person, with love --*God predestines all things will work together for their good:*

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. (Rom. 8:28 NKJ)

Those who are called to live with God forever, according to the purpose of enjoying life with Him for all eternity, in love and holiness, enjoying life to its fullest with God—He in them, and they in Him, are selected from among all who would ever live, and predestined unto salvation.

God will not tolerate Death or Satan have the victory over one of these He foreknew are His, therefore He predestines them unto salvation.

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the

image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Rom. 8:29-39 NKJ)

Everyone else is "undetermined", they choose in this life whether they also will live eternally with God in love.

Those who haven't heard the gospel of Christ, will upon death, even infants are granted the intellectually ability to understand, and those who believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and trust in His sacrifice to pay for their sins, will be raised to the resurrection of life, even if they hear the gospel while in Hades, the grave:

5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

6 For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. (1 Pet. 4:5-6 NKJ)

28 "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice

29 "and come forth— those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. (Jn. 5:28-29 NKJ)

Upon death there is a judgment, the dead hear Christ's voice and all who obey pass over from death into life, eagerly waiting for His second appearance unto salvation:

24 For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

25 not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—

26 He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; **but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.**

27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but **after this the judgment,**

28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who **eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.** (Heb. 9:24-28 NKJ)

Predestination unto salvation is the action God took to guarantee none of His children were lost because of the Fall.

God Predestined those He foreknew would fall, unto salvation. Not based upon anything the “fallen version” were or did in this life. It was God’s good will and pleasure not to lose any of His beloved because the Fall prevented the “unfallen version” from coming into existence.

(for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), (Rom. 9:11 NKJ)

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. (Eph. 1:4-5 NKJ)

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. (Eph. 2:8-10 NKJ)

Evidently it was unacceptable to God the fallen realm would corrupt so many of those He knows are His. Nor was it acceptable to refuse to create and all who would choose to love God (after He loved them first 1 Jn. 4:19) would not come into existence. Neither was tolerable.

Election unto Salvation resolved God’s dilemma. Only creatures with absolute free will, could love God freely for Who He is. If their Free Will were a farce, their “robot love” would be an abomination. Therefore, to endow free will yet permit the inevitable fall occur [or the Beloved would never exist], God had to predestine they be saved, regardless what

the fall made them become.

In other words, in a fallen world few would be saved in this life. Most never hear the gospel. Many are deceived by the temptations and lies of this fallen realm and so ignore or despise what little of the gospel they heard.

Therefore, God predestines the Elect unto salvation, even if they must pass through hell first before they repent and believe in Jesus.

The torments of Hades are the “antidote” to the poison of the fall. Those torments cannot fail to bring one to their senses. Only those irrevocably set against living in God (John 17:21; Rev. 21:3, 22-23) in Holiness and light (James 1:17) will fail to repent and believe in Jesus and be saved.

But there is a penalty to pay for endowing creatures with free will. Some would choose evil. As God knew the fall was inevitable, He had to endure with much long suffering these vessels of wrath (Rom. 9:22-24).

Why didn't God predestine everyone unto salvation? That would violate their free will. Not all in the “unfallen realm” loved God after God loved them first. Absolutely free will resulted in about a third of the angels (Rev. 12:4) choosing evil. The analogy implies a third of humanity reject God's love also. They love evil. Forcing them into a relationship would be an evil act. Forcing them against their will, is antithetical to God's character.

Everyone has every opportunity to choose life and join the Elect. That is required by the presence of names in the Book of Life that are not “The Elect”:

“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. (Rev. 3:5 NKJ)

The promise is a fraud if the name cannot be blotted out from the Book of Life. Therefore, this is not spoken to the Elect whose names cannot be blotted out. Elected before they did good or bad (Rom. 9:11) their names were written “before the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8; 17:8; Eph. 1:4). As they are predestined unto salvation (Rom. 8:29) they overcome.

Therefore, names can exist in the Book of life that are not “Elect”, the “undetermined” could be written in or blotted out. They have free will choice and equal chance to be saved with the Elect. For example, the names of the wicked men chasing David potentially could be written in the book of life. David asks God blot their names out so that doesn't happen:

May they be blotted out of the book of life, And may they not be recorded with the righteous. (Ps. 69:28 NAS)

An Aramaic Psalms Targum explains how some ancients understood this verse:

Give iniquity for their iniquity, and let them not be purified to enter the assembly of your righteous ones. (Ps. 69:28 PST)

The Book of Life has the names of the Elect and potentially the undetermined (who could choose to go either way). The latter are judged according to their works (Rev. 20:13,15), which determines which books their names appear in on Judgment Day.

God is “longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9 NKJ). If the “undetermined” do what is right, their names won’t be blotted out from the Book of Life.

14 “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

15 “that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 “For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

21 “But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” (Jn. 3:14-21 NKJ)

11 For there is no partiality with God.

12 For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law

13 (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified. (Rom. 2:11-13 NKJ)

And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear (1 Pet. 1:17 NKJ)

Unfortunately, when Paul affirmed “there is no unrighteousness with God” (Rom. 9:14) he assumed readers accepted that premise without question. That all would discern God never subverted Pharaoh’s free will. Pharaoh

hardened his own heart. God orchestrated events that enabled Pharaoh's free will manifest itself, but never subverted it.

God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Ex. 7:3) by permitting Satan work deceiving wonders (Ex. 7:11-13) that strengthened Pharaoh's free will choice to resist God. No "hardening energy" went from God to Pharaoh to make him choose evil. That was entirely Pharaoh's choice, but orchestrated events led to Pharaoh being ruler over God's people and his choice to resist God be actualized. God did not cause Pharaoh to attack God's people, he chose to do that on his own. Compare what this verse says about a different attack:

Indeed they shall surely assemble, but not because of Me. Whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake. (Isa. 54:15 NKJ)

If any nation comes to fight you, it is not because I sent them. Whoever attacks you will go down in defeat. (Isa. 54:15 NLT)

"Their eyes THEY have closed"

For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.' (Matt. 13:15 NKJ)

As everything requires Sovereign God's permission to occur, it can be said "God sends the energy of delusion", but in context God stops restraining the energy of spiritism that is deceiving Satan's children [like Pharaoh was deceived] so they can do the evil they freely desire to do:

*6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.
7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.
8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.
9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,
10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.
11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,
12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thess. 2:6-12 NKJ)*

END NOTES

[1]

4268 πρόγνωσις prognosis

Meaning: 1) foreknowledge 2) forethought, pre-arrangement-Strong’s Concordance

QUESTION—What is meant by πρόγνωσιν ‘foreknowledge/predestination’?
1. It refers to what is known beforehand [LN; KJV, NAB, NIV, REB]: he chose you in accordance with what he knew beforehand. It is the personal intimacy of a loving father, not just a knowledge of facts [TNTC]. It speaks of a relationship that has its origin in God himself [NIC].-Abernathy, D. (2008). An Exegetical Summary of 1 Peter (2nd ed., p. 13). Dallas, TX: SIL International.

[2]

4267 προγινώσκω proginosko

The church has debated what the “foreknowledge” of God is since Augustine and I believe they missed Paul uses “foreknew” in Romans 8:29 in the same way he does in Romans 11:2. Perhaps they didn’t correctly quantify God’s Omniscience, He knows all things without the act of foreknowledge. He is Infinite, all spacetime is in Him, including what is future. Nothing exists apart from God, including the future.

29 For whom He foreknew (4267 προγινώσκω proginosko), He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Rom. 8:29 NKJ)

2 God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew (4267 προγινώσκω proginosko). Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, (Rom. 11:2 NKJ)

The sense of “foreknew” (4267 προγινώσκω proginosko) in Romans 11:2 is found Romans 8:29, its knowing a selection of people “before others”:
Sense: to foreknow (personally) – to befriend or be acquainted with someone in a familiar way ahead of time or before meeting; implying an exclusivity of choice relative to those not befriended-Bible Sense Lexicon, Logos Bible Software

QUESTION—In what sense is the verb προγινώσκω ‘know beforehand’ used here?
... Before the foundation of the world God knew them intimately and chose them [NICNT, NTC], or loved them specially and chose them [Ho]...The knowing here has the Hebraic sense of a relationship experienced and acknowledged [WBC]. God knew and loved them beforehand [Mu, St].-Abernathy, D. (2008). An Exegetical Summary of Romans 1–8 (2nd ed., p. 560). Dallas, TX: SIL International.

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Does this “Grand Theory of Creation” satisfy the “problem of evil?”

written by Alfred Persson | November 11, 2024



Is it possible to reconcile the existence of evil with the Sovereign LORD Yehovah who is Love who is impeccably good?

Calvinism emphasizes the absolute sovereignty and predestination of God,

therefore must maintain the Sovereign has predestined everything, including ordaining the existence of evil. While they insist this does not make God the author of sin or evil although it serves God's purposes, this raises questions about God's goodness if everything, including evil acts, is predestined by God.

Arminianism, on the other hand, with its emphasis on human free will attributes the existence of evil to human free will and the consequential nature of human choices rather than God's direct decree. But this raises questions about the extent of God's sovereignty and control over the world if human choices can contravene His will.

Does a "Grand Theory of Everything" exist that can reconcile the Sovereignty of the God of Love and Good, with the existence of evil that both John Calvin and Jacob Arminius didn't know?

I believe there is, and it can be deduced from the paradox of Election:

How can individuals be "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God" (1 Pt. 1:2) when their Election occurred before they were born "neither having done any good or evil" (Rom. 9:11 KJV).

For both statements to be true, two versions of the Elect must exist, and they must be forever separate and distinct. Version #1 resides in God's Foreknowledge and never came into existence, while Version #2 is what became actual, coming into existence through one man, Adam after he sinned (Rom. 5:12ff).

The Grand Theory proposes God foreknew everything, including who everyone would be if the fall never happened. Where Version #1 was truly free, their response to God not affected by sin and delusion. Those who responded to God's Love, with love were elected, predestined unto salvation lest any of them be lost in this fallen world of sin and delusion:

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.

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. (Rom. 8:28-30 NKJ)

As Version #1 exists solely in God's omniscience, nothing Version 2 does in this life was a factor in God's selection. Individuals can be elect according to the foreknowledge of God, yet not according to their works in this life they may do.

So how does this result in a "Grand Theory of God's Love?" God loves His children whom He foreknew so much, He is willing to endure with much patience and long suffering the fallen realm, and all its vessels of

wrath who have fitted themselves to eternal destruction:

22 What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,

23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, (Rom. 9:22-23 NKJ)

For the greater good of enjoying eternity with Version #1, whom Version #2 will become when all things are restored in Christ. God permitted the fall of creation. Otherwise Version #1 would never spring into existence.

Another aspect of this Grand Theory, is to acknowledge the infinity of God (1 Kings 8:27), that our matrix exists in the infinite Mind of the Word, who verbalizes God's bringing it into concrete existence:

"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, **heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You**. How much less this temple which I have built! (1 Ki. 8:27 NKJ)

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.

All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. (Jn. 1:1-3 NKJ)

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

17 And He is before all things, and **in Him all things consist**. (Col. 1:15-17 NKJ)

"for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' (Acts 17:28 NKJ)

Jesus is God the Son, Second Person of the holy Trinity, and cannot be a lesser deity as some suppose. No one but God Himself can be the Glue holding everything together much like electromagnetism holds atoms together "bound by light" so they have the appearance of being solid":

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. (Rom. 1:20 NKJ)

Our spacetime continuum, past present future exists in timeless infinite God. From His perspective, the elect are already seated with Christ in His kingdom, but to finite creatures this reality will become known in the coming ages:

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He

loved us,
5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with
Christ (by grace you have been saved),
6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly
places in Christ Jesus,
7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His
grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:4-7 NKJ)

Divine Holiness is separateness from all evil. Evil occurs in the Matrix
caused solely by the actors in the Matrix, much as in the movie “The
Matrix”. God cooperates with created things by sustaining the reality in
which it exists, but this “concurrence” doesn’t mean that God is the
direct cause or author of evil.

Satan and fallen humanity are the blame for the existence of evil, but
lest the “greater good” not come into existence God permits it be so for
now.

**Does that “Grand Theory of Creation” satisfy the “problem of evil?” What
say you?**

Everything I said uses words as they are defined in the scriptures.

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in
Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,
2 elect according to the foreknowledge (4268. πρόγνωσις) of God the
Father (1 Pet. 1:1-2 NKJ)

4268. πρόγνωσις prógnōsis; gen. prognōseōs, fem. noun from proginōskō
(4267), to know beforehand.-Zodhiates, S. (2000). In The Complete Word
Study Dictionary: New Testament (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

God didn’t choose without knowing anything about the chosen. No
intelligent Being ignores what he knows when choosing people or things.

The proposition God did not elect according to what He knew about the
Elect, is a contradiction of the plain teaching of scripture.

Calvin’s self-contradiction proves Sherlock Holmes a better logician

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Calvin was not a sound logician like Sherlock Holmes, that is evident by the self-contradiction his premises imply.

For example, Peter says:

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. (1 Pet. 1:1 KJV)

Calvin's self-contradiction:

After first admitting "elect according to the foreknowledge of God" means "God knew before the world was created whom he had elected for salvation". Calvin then smears as "sophist" and mere imagination the idea God elected according to His knowledge of the person He knew!!!

"However, he at the same time reminds us whence that election flows, by which we are separated for salvation, that we may not perish with the world; for he says, according to the foreknowledge of God. This is the fountain and the first cause: God knew before the world was created whom he had elected for salvation.

But we ought wisely to consider what this precognition or foreknowledge is. For the sophists, in order to obscure the grace of God, imagine that the merits of each are foreseen by God, and that thus the reprobate are distinguished from the elect, as every one proves himself worthy of this or that lot. But Scripture everywhere sets the counsel of God, on which is founded our salvation, in opposition to our merits. Hence, when Peter calls them elect according to the precognition of God, he intimates that the cause of it depends on nothing else but on God alone, for he of his own free will has chosen us. Then the foreknowledge of God excludes every worthiness on the part of man. We have treated this subject more at large in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and in other places."-Calvin, J., Translated by Owen, J. (2010). Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles (pp. 24–25). Logos Bible Software.

Sherlock might ask Calvin: "Can God really ignore what He knows when He elects?" Would not ignoring what one knows during the selection process be a sign of feeble-mindedness, or insanity? Can you produce examples of human creators who ignore what they know when creating or choosing materials?

Sherlock Holmes would have concluded from Peter's "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God" and Paul's "Election is not according to anything we are or do now" that TWO versions of the Elect must be in existence:

One exists only in God's Foreknowledge, the other exists today in this fallen realm.

Then, God could elect according to His knowing the "unfallen version" of us before He creation, and not according to what we are now in this fallen world.

Scripture implies what God foreknew:

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.

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Rom. 8:28-29 NKJ)

In God’s Omniscience, He knows all who would come into existence by His creation. Like “highlighted text” that makes one see some words “before the others”, God “foreknows those who loved Him after He loved them first”, loving them even more. As for those who did not, God ignored them. That is why nothing is said about the Reprobate in Romans 8:28ff. They are irrelevant.

Predestination unto Salvation: Was Divine Election Conditional or Unconditional or Both?

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11 (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls),
12 it was said to her, “The older shall serve the younger.”
13 As it is written, “Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.”
14 What shall we say then? **Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!** (Rom. 9:11-14 NKJ)

A Thought Experiment: Imagine the Elect aren’t the only ones saved. What shall we say then?

Paul names two Groups that will be saved: The ELECT and Israel.

Israel was blinded at first but “have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not!”

Therefore, both Elect and Non-Elect (their fullness) will be saved.

7 What then? **Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it**, and the rest were blinded.

8 Just as it is written: “God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day.”

9 And David says: “Let their table become a snare and a trap, A stumbling block and a recompense to them.

10 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, and bow down their back always.”

11 **I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not!** But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.

12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, **how much more their fullness (4138 πλήρωμα pleroma)!** (Rom. 11:7-12 NKJ)

4138 πλήρωμα pleroma

Meaning: 1) that which is (has been) filled.-Strong’s

Compare:

*Now if their stumbling brings riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their **full number bring!*** (Rom. 11:12 CSB)

Where and When was their “fullness” achieved?

In hell. They were blinded, didn’t obtain salvation. They died “enemies of the gospel” so they went to hell and in hell they repented and believed in Christ:

25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

27 For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.”

28 Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but **concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.**

29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

30 For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience,

31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy.

32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! (Rom. 11:26-33 NKJ)

Paul began distinguishing Israel (who was blinded and did not obtain salvation) from “the Elect” (who weren’t blinded and did obtain salvation) Rom. 11:7. Therefore, “election for the sake of the fathers” (Rom. 11:28) is an “election” of the Nation of Israel granted for the sake of the fathers. Israel as a nation was Elect, not individually as in Romans 11:7.

Its a different kind of election, not equivocation.

There certainly is no unrighteousness with God when He Elects individuals unto salvation whoever He chooses to have mercy upon, *because He did not thereby Reprobate unto damnation those He did not elect.*

Do other scriptures imply its not just the Elect that can be saved? Yes, in the symbolism of the book of life:

The names of the Elect are in the Book of Life (Phil. 4:3; Rev. 13:8; 17:8) but other names written in this Book cannot be of the “Elect” because those names can be blotted out (Rev. 3:5; Exod. 32:32; Ps. 69:28) or written in (Ps. 69:28; 87:6; Mal. 3:16).

Blotted Out:

*“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and **I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life**; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. (Rev. 3:5 NKJ)*

32 “Yet now, if You will forgive their sin— but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.”

*33 And the LORD said to Moses, “**Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.** (Exod. 32:32-33 NKJ)*

*Let them be **blotted out of the book of the living**, And not be written with the righteous. (Ps. 69:28 NKJ)*

Written In:

*Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And not **be written with the righteous.** (Ps. 69:28 NKJ)*

***The LORD will record, When He registers the peoples:** “This one was born there.” Selah (Ps. 87:6 NKJ)*

*Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard them; **So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name.** (Mal. 3:16 NKJ)*

As God did not arbitrarily exclude people from the Book of Life when He wrote the names of the Elect in, others beside the Elect can be saved. Therefore, all the scriptures inviting everyone to believe, to choose life, aren’t a charade. They are genuine offers for life.

Moreover, everyone assumes Esau is unsaved. He clearly wasn't one of God's Elect. *But is he unsaved eternally?*

Although the writer of Hebrews describes him as a Godless profane person who sold his birth right for a meal (Heb. 12:16), he also notes Esau and Jacob both were blessed "concerning things to come":

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. (Heb. 11:20 NKJ)

It doesn't appear from this "concerning things to come" Esau is eternally damned. Just the opposite.

Although the sins of the descendants of Esau led to their destruction, God enriched Esau's first descendants and destroyed the Horites from before them just as He did for Israel:

The Horites formerly dwelt in Seir, but the descendants of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their place, just as Israel did to the land of their possession which the LORD gave them.) (Deut. 2:12 NKJ)

3 `Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac.

*4 `To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. **To Esau I gave the mountains of Seir to possess**, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. (Jos. 24:3-4 NKJ)*

Although Paul focuses on God's right to do with His creation as He wills, that wouldn't exhaust all the reasons why "there is no unrighteousness with God". *When it comes to salvation, God isn't partial:*

4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

5 But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

6 who "will render to each one according to his deeds":

7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality;

8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness— indignation and wrath,

9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek;

10 but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

11 For there is no partiality with God.

12 For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law

13 (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified;

14 for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, 15 who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them)

16 in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel. (Rom. 2:4-16 NKJ)