

## WHY DO PEOPLE SUFFER?

## WHO IS RULING THE WORLD?

Version 2021

### SUMMARY

Who is ruling the world? First, we need to establish what does “world” mean from scripture not from a dictionary. It means “the human race on earth for whatever reason not seeking God” (Joh 17:11; Jam 4:4). It is not all of the human race but those who are not seeking God. Then the key question is - Does a person truly have the choice to seek or not seek God or is it predetermined?

There are 2 main philosophies/doctrines that believers believe, each have sections of truth but only one is correct:

1. God has given people freewill but they are unable to choose so He has predetermined who He wants – Fate.
2. God has given people freewill to choose Him or not – Freewill.

Let us explore each of these together, there will be a statement and then a response to that statement:

### PREFACE

Dear reader, upfront I want to be transparent with my position and the impetus to this question. My position from scripture is that we suffer because of the sin that is in the world. Sin came in from the beginning, from Satan, from people and from the authority that God has given us to choose, and the wrong choices we sometimes make. The impetus of the question comes down to: “Why is there suffering?”

The biggest issue I see with the ‘Fate doctrine’ is that it removes the individual’s responsibility and authority that God has given them through Christ. The person is focused on “if God gives it, then He gives it, and if not, then not” vs. “desiring, pushing, pressing forward and asking – basically knocking and it will be opened”. They are waiting for God to do the knocking. Yes He can, so can we, as He has given this to us (Matt. 7:7-8). If one removes the individual responsibility and authority of the believer that Christ has given them – what is left to impact the world because we cannot do it in our own power but through Him? How will the world be salted? How will they shine in the dark world? They will never see them operating in the gifts of the spirit (1 Cor 12-14) because they don’t earnestly desire the best gifts (1 Cor. 12:31; 1 Cor 14:1), they are waiting on God. God doesn’t put it in our mouth but in our reach. Nor will they operate in the authority Yeshua said for example, “These signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” (Mark 16:17-

18). Their doctrine will discount many scriptures such as this thus making the word of no effect in their life – more importantly easily ignoring Yeshua’s words because of doctrine.

If one preaches this doctrine to a mass of people this is what it would sound like, “God loves the world therefore I am preaching to you all. But God has only chosen some of you to be saved. You will be saved no matter what you do as He has chosen you. God uses Jesus to connect you to Him. The rest of the people are going to Hell, sorry about that, but God has His reason for not choosing you or your family member. No one can make a good decision because of sin and therefore He makes you chose Him. You have no say in this. Technically you are not robots but you are. The devil has no impact on you unless God gives him access. He is God’s lap dog. So don’t blame the devil because God has allowed it for your good. You should pray because God said you must, but at the end of the day it doesn’t make a difference as it is not based on your prayer. God will do whatever He wants regardless of your prayer.”

To which one can quickly respond with many scriptures such as the following but they will all be discounted because of doctrine, “God desires ALL men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands ALL men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that ANY should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36).

Why does one believe this? Based on doctrine that started in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century by Augustine and then formalized by John Calvin in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Also, it gives people a sense of comfort that they are chosen and they won’t walk away or lose their salvation – and this scares them. It is a philosophical statement vs. scriptural. This document is to help those who may have the doctrine of Calvinism in some areas, validated by scripture in order to free them from the clutches of Satan, in order to live as Yeshua has intended. Like Yeshua said to Paul, “To open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.” (Acts 26:18).

## FATE OR FREEWILL?

*God has given people freewill but they are unable to choose so He has predetermined who He wants.*

## WHY DO SOME, HOLD TO THE POSITION THAT GOD IS ULTIMATELY RULING THE WORLD?

Based on the fact that God created all things and how they operate (Genesis 1-2). He knows the future, has a plan for the future, therefore how can people truly have freewill when it seems to be predetermined.

In Response to God ruling the world: Scripturally this is an incorrect statement. He is not ruling the world, as the scripture says Satan is the ruler of the world (Joh 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). “He who is a friend of the world is an enemy of God” (Jam 4:4). If God was ruling the world then a friend of the world is a friend of God. God loves the world (Joh 3:16) and now helps them seek Him through the conviction of Yeshua (Joh 16:8).

It is true that God has created all physical and spiritual laws (Col 1:16-19), including establishing rules and boundaries (Act 17:25-27). One of the rules He has given is the fact that mankind has the responsibility to rule over the earth (Gen 1:28; Psa. 115:16). Even though since Adam, mankind has failed and has not

done what God required of them (Rom 3:23), He has not taken this authority away from them. God didn't put Satan in charge of the earth, but mankind, through their rebellion, gave Satan that authority. Satan tempted Yeshua and said, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours" (Luke 4:6-7). The only reason Satan is ruler of the world is because mankind delivered it to him through their sin.

*If you think Mankind is ruling, then are you making yourself God?*

Firstly, Satan is ruling the world through the sin of man. And yes, mankind is the authority God designed to rule over the earth. This is God's idea and plan (Gen 1:28; Psa 115:16) not ours and will hold us accountable for the way we ruled. God is the Owner of the earth, not man. He has made us ruler, so we are to rule effectively, glorifying His name. The only way to rule effectively is to surrender to Yeshua (Joh 14:6).

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen 1:26-28). David said to the LORD, "What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man, that You visit him? For You have made him lack a little from God, and have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts of the field; the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, and all that pass through the paths of the seas" (Psa 8:5-8). And a psalmist said, "The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD's; but the earth He has given to the children of men" (Psa 115:16). God has not and will not violate the command that went out of His mouth (Psa 138:2; Num 23:19). Just like God could have stopped Adam and Eve from eating of the forbidden fruit, yet He didn't because He gave them the ability to choose.

*WHAT ABOUT THESE DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS, ARE THEY TRUE?*

*God can do anything He wants!*

That is NOT true according to God! There are parameters He has set that He will not contradict Himself, He keeps His word! (Num 23:19). Does anyone think it was an easy decision to send His Son to the cross? He had to, as He will not go against His word. As the scripture says, "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name" (Psa 138:2).

- God said, "So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and **stand in the gap** before Me on behalf of the land, that **I should not destroy it; but I found no one**. Therefore, I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed **their deeds on their own head**" (Eze 22:30-31). God, in His mercy, wanted to help a group of people who had broken His laws. And because they broke His laws they were going to receive the consequences of destruction from Him. However, God did not want to destroy them. He sought someone to stand in the gap for them, in other words, a righteous person to use their authority that He has given them to petition Him to save those people, like Moses (Exo 32:9-10; 32:21-32). God couldn't just stop the events taking place because He would be violating His word. Even though God

personally wanted to stop the situation, He couldn't. Therefore, against God's will, He had to destroy them according to His word.

- In Amo 3:7 there is a resounding statement, "Surely, the Lord GOD **does nothing, unless** He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets". He even revealed Yeshua as the Messiah many times before Yeshua came (Deu 18:18-19).
- Asaph said, "Yes, again and again **they tempted** God, and **limited** the Holy One of Israel" (Psa 78:41). People have actually limited God's work in their life.
- Yeshua said that they have made the word of God of no effect by their traditions (Mar 7:13). Did you ever think something could make the Word of God powerless, to have no effect in a person's life? Tradition can do that.
- Yeshua who is God on earth (1 Tim 3:16) couldn't do many mighty works in His own home town because of their unbelief (Mat 13:58). Not God's unbelief, but theirs.

*No one can resist God's influence to save someone!*

That is NOT true, just like God's word can have no effect in a person's life because of unbelief (Mat 13:58) and tradition (Mar 7:13), even so with Salvation. Adam initially had no sin and all He knew was good, very good. Yet he rejected God's influence and word. It wasn't God's desire.

Here is another example – Israel who received the commandments and had God's help, rejected God's word after just witnessing the amazing plagues in Egypt. God had told them they would enter a land flowing with milk and honey, yet they didn't because of their disobedience (Exo 3:17). This wasn't God's desire for them.

One more example is where Stephen told the Pharisees, "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! **You always resist the Holy Spirit**; as your fathers did, so do you" (Act 7:51). The word "always resist" is a plural ongoing, meaning they were "continually rejecting" Holy Spirit's influence in their life.

*Once Saved Always Saved!*

Once Saved Always Saved! Or another way of saying this "Is it possible to accept Jesus Christ as LORD and later turn from Him?" We hear this a lot but is it scriptural? Paul said, "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 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 8:38-39). God loves the world but they are not all saved (John 3:16).

There are ways that can separate believers from God for eternity. But some would argue, then they are not true believers. But in response, who are you to call someone not a true believer, if they have been baptized and call upon the name of the Lord? (Rom 10:6-7). Can you say that you are a true believer? Yeshua speaks to the church leaders and the churches in Revelation 2 and 3, they are believers and some of them will not overcome (Rev. 3:16). So what are some of the ways a believer will not be saved for eternity?

- A personal choice to later reject Yeshua after they came to Him. No one can take a believer out of God's hand except that the believer themselves wants to leave, it is called choice/freewill. Peter

addresses these believers who do such things, “For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, “The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (2 Pet 2:22). Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? (Heb. 10:29). This person was a believer because they were sanctified (past tense). Sanctified means “set apart, made holy only” this is only possible through the Blood of Yeshua.

- They deny Yeshua in front of others, yet in their heart they had Yeshua as their Lord. Yeshua said, “Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Mat 10:33).
- They live in unforgiveness. “But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Mat 6:15).
- They are living a lawless lifestyle. Some have Yeshua as Savior but not as their Lord (Joh 14:24). Yeshua said “Don’t call me Lord unless you do the things I say” (Luk 6:46). “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work law-less-ness” (Mat 7:22-23). Paul warned us a number of times, “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal 5:19-21; 1 Cor 6:9-10). Therefore, they can be blotted out of the book of life (Rev 3:5).
- Believers consciously hurting other Believers. “But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers” (Luk 12:45-46; Mat 24:44-51).
- Complacent, worldly focus. A friend of the world is an enemy of God (Jam 4:4). An enemy of God doesn’t remain in the Kingdom of God. Yeshua said to BELIEVERS, “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth...” (Rev 3:15-16). Yeshua speaking to the foolish virgins (foolish believers) who came to Him saying, “Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 25:11-13).

There are more than these above examples in the scripture where believers, who are in the Kingdom of God, can be removed. Believers are betrothed to God, they are washed by the Blood of Yeshua (Heb 13:12), they are equipped with Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13). We have this assurance that He has equipped us, will help us but we also have our part. To them Yeshua says, “He that overcometh shall inherit all things” (Rev. 21:7). In other words, he who doesn’t overcome will not. And those who don’t overcome look like

this, “the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev 21:7-8). Therefore, the doctrine statement “Once saved always saved” is not scriptural.

*God is Sovereign! This statement for many includes the following: It is God’s will to kill and allow rape. He is Sovereign, He can do what He wants. Ultimately, He makes people sin who He hasn’t chosen. The Devil is God’s “lap dog” and does His will too.*

In response to the word Sovereign: The word “Sovereign” has various meanings and most word for word translations don’t have this word in the Bible. The same Greek word in Luk 2:29 (“Sovereign” NIV) is also used as “masters” (1 Tim 6:1). The problem with this word is that everyone has their own definition of this word and it is used as a scapegoat when people do not understand a certain outcome. This is also used to justify holding scripture in “tension” – “You know God is sovereign”. The Sovereignty doctrine is near to the exact replica of the Islamic Allah – guess who is behind it, Satan! Whatever our personal definition concerning the word “Sovereign” let’s forget about it because it drives more confusion. It may sound honoring to God, but it is not, stick to what the Word of God says about His character.

In response to God making someone sin: If one believes this then they don’t know God. Sin grieves God (Gen 6:6). God does not make people sin, they sin by themselves, yet He tells them to rule over sin (Gen 4:7). He wouldn’t have told them to do that if it was not possible. If we want to know God’s will then all we need to do is look to Yeshua, did Yeshua make anyone sin! “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” (Mat 7:11).

In response to God allowing rape etc.: God has given choice to mankind and if they abuse the choices, God will hold them accountable either now on earth and/or in the future. But the choice is still theirs to make. If murder, rape and molestation are considered God’s Will then God is also the originator of sin, yet He judges those He made do it; therefore, He would be judging Himself – this does not make sense. This ideology is against the character of God, yet the Islamic religion – e.g. Islam promotes the rape of women because Allah allows it.

In response to the Devil does what God wants: Yes, sometimes God has tricked the Devil like Job or used Satan to tempt Yeshua. But the Devil has his own will and does many things against God’s will. His motivation is to steal, and to kill, and to destroy where Yeshua has come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (Joh 10:10). One cannot get any more polar opposite in motivation. It is in the Devil’s character to destroy mankind whom he hates. When someone is outside of God’s protection by the things they do (going against God’s law), then the Devil is there to cause damage (1 Cor 5:1-5). It is not God’s will, but it is His will that they repent and that He protects them from evil (Psa 91, Matt 6:13).

God gave us His law to help us, He said, “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live” (Deu 30:19). The choice is ours to make, choose wisely.

*God's will, will be done regardless therefore we don't really need to pray.*

Yeshua told us, "Our Heavenly Father ...Your will be done on earth **as it is in Heaven**" (Mat 6:10). It is clear that His will is not being done all the time, the world doesn't always look like Heaven and that is why we need to pray. As mentioned earlier, if there were people who interceded for others, God would not have destroyed them (Eze 22:30-31). We are made in God's image and the words of our mouth are important. That's why confession is made unto salvation (Rom 10:10), every idle word will be held accountable in the day of judgement (Mat 12:36) because life and death are in the power of the tongue (Pro 18:21). We are to watch and pray that we don't fall into temptation (Mat 26:41) because it is not God's desire that we fall into temptation, but through prayer, it is in our power not to.

*No matter what a person does, God has already determined who He wants to save and who He doesn't.*

This is not correct. It is true that God has a plan for everyone that is born (Jer 29:11), but not everyone follows His plan – like Esau. Esau was told to serve the younger (Jacob) but he refused to. In addition, God's will is that all be saved, not some people (Eze 33:10-20; Joh 3:16; 2 Pet 3:9; 1 Tim 2:3-4; Mat 18:14). He takes no delight in the death of the wicked (Eze 33:11). BUT it is a choice a person makes to repent or not, God doesn't repent for them (Act 17:30-31). The Psalmist said to the LORD, "My life is continually in my hand, yet I do not forget Your law" (Psa 119:109). Many people choose to forget His law, it is called freewill.

Yeshua said, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev 3:20). Who opens the door?

*Does God establish authorities like Hitler, Stalin?!*

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (Rom 13:1-2). "... know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He will" (Dan 4:25). "He removes kings and raises up kings" (Dan. 2:21). "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes" (Prov. 21:1).

In Response Dan 2:21; 4:25: Daniel is not saying that "every" or "all" kings that are raised and lowered are by God. He is telling Nebuchadnezzar that God is the ultimate authority. He is higher than all kings and has raised and lowered kings. People have raised up kings but God can judge them like He did with Herod (Acts 12:21-23). To confirm, God does not raise up all Kings, the LORD who said, "They set up kings, **but not by Me**; they made princes, but I did not acknowledge them" (Hos. 8:4). Here are other verses where mankind made kings and not God (Jug. 9:6, 18; 2 Sam. 2:8-9; 2 Kings 14:21; 23:30). Here is one example where the Dragon (Satan) himself gives authority to the Beast to reign in the world (Rev. 13:3-4). There might be others, that is why he tempted Yeshua by showing Him "all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."" (Matt. 4:8-9).



In fact, it is clear that God was against making Kings and that the nations had already made kings for themselves (1 Sam 8). The first indication that God made anyone a king was Saul, but God didn't want to, "for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them" (1 Sam. 8:7). The Israelites insisted they wanted to be like the nations who had kings 1 Sam. 8:19-20 "we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."

Re: Prov. 21:1: The water is the will of the king, God doesn't change the water into something else but directs it. For example, God gave Solomon wisdom but when Solomon was old he rebelled against God. "So the Lord became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the Lord had commanded" (1 Kings 11:9). Yet Solomon based on his own will chose not to listen to God. God didn't direct Solomon to rebel against Him, it was Solomon's own will and God gave Solomon the consequences for rejecting Him.

Re: Rom. 13:1, Just like Satan tempted Yeshua with scripture, so Satan tempts Christians with this scripture to sin. They say, "We are required to be subjected to ALL governing authorities" (Rom. 13:1). Therefore, we need to follow all they say about .....!" The conclusion of this is a lie from Satan. Before we reflect on this verse, ask – Why did God commend the following for going against their leader's orders? Hebrew midwives, who were asked by Pharaoh to kill the Israelite male infants and they did not obey (Exo 1:16, 20); Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego disobeyed the King's command to bow to an Idol and responded to the King, "We will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Dan 3:18); and the Disciples refused to obey the council and the high Priest (Act 4:19) but continued to preach in Yeshua's name. Therefore, we are not to follow man when the order contradicts the word of God. Peter and the other Apostles said, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Act 5:20).

The Greek word "governing" authorities literally "higher/better" authorities not "governing" authorities. Those who are in a higher position. This Greek word "Authorities" appears 103 times in the NT. In all 103 places in the NT, it is never in reference to a leader or ruler, but in reference to the POSITION of authority. Meaning, having an authority structure is from God. Without an authority structure there is chaos or anarchy. Authority structure is good and from God but not every ruler in the position of authority is from God neither do they submit themselves to what God wants them to do. In verse 3, Paul talks about the ruler in that Authority structure. Please notice the characteristics of the leader Paul is referring to, "he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth EVIL" (Rom. 13:4). Notice this leader isn't one who executes wrath upon them that doeth good! Please understand this, if they do then they are not of God so don't use Romans 13 for this leader! So no, God did not establish Hitler, Stalin etc. They were chosen by people or Satan because they brought wrath on those who did good.

*All are sinners and therefore they can never make the right choices!*

Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin (Rom 5:12-14), therefore it is impossible to rule over sin for we were born into sin. Especially without Christ. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world,



according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved) (Eph 2:1-5).

It is true that all are sinners have fallen, but it is also true that mankind has the ability to rule over sin (Gen 4:7). The concept that because a person is a sinner, it is therefore impossible for them to do anything good or holy, is NOT correct. Many have done good and have chosen good, including Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David etc. Therefore the statement that people are “unable”/”never” make the right choices because we are in a sinful environment is not true. Just like Adam was in the perfect Garden of Eden where there was no sin, and all he knew was goodness – based on that same logic it was not possible for him to sin. Of course that is not true either, as free-will is the ability to choose life or death, good or evil, regardless of the environment one is in. Remember Adam ate knowing he was disobeying God, it wasn’t a surprise or by accident (Gen 3:5; 1 Tim 2:14). Therefore, if it is possible to do evil when only goodness dwelt in him, then it is also possible to do good when sin dwelt in him too.

Cain sinned and yet God told him to rule over it, which means it is possible to rule over sin (Gen 4:6-7). God wouldn’t have said it was possible to rule over sin if it wasn’t. Later God tells the Israelites, “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live” (Deu 30:19). God saw that mankind was weak so He sent His son. Today it is much easier for Christians who have Holy Spirit dwelling in them to do what is good and walk in the freedom because of what Yeshua has done (Eze 11:19-21; Eph 1:13). Yet Christians also sin today, but thanks be to God we have a sin cleaner – the blood of Yeshua (1 Joh 1:7-9) and the conviction to walk in the Spirit and not the flesh (Rom 8:1 TR). We are no longer a slave of sin but we are a slave of righteousness (Rom 6:16).

*God has destined some to Hell when they are born!*

Like God hardening Pharaoh. “For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth” (Rom 9:17-18). Or like God hating Esau. “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; It was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated” (Rom 9:11-13).

In Response: Not correct. Firstly, understand that the lake of fire was prepared for the Devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41), it wasn’t designed for mankind. Mankind who rejects God’s Word will go there (Rev 20:15). Secondly, this question on Rom 9 would suggest that God raised Pharaoh up from birth to punish and harden him; or that God chose to hate Esau before Esau was born. But both of these are not correct interpretations. The early church would have understood these because they read the OT scriptures. Before these are explained from the OT, from an understanding of God’s character, if God chose someone before they were born to send them to hell, what choice does the person really have? And when God judges them one day based on their works, how can He send them to hell when He made them do it (Rev

20:11-15)? Is that the God we know of in scripture? Absolutely not! It is His will that ALL be saved, not some:

- “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Pet 3:9)
- “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Tim 2:3-4)
- “Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.” (Mat 18:14)
- “Truly, then, God overlooking the times of ignorance, now He strictly commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day in which He is going to judge the world in righteousness by a Man whom He appointed, having given proof to all by raising Him from the dead.” (Act 17:30-31)

*If people don't hear the good news, who is at fault? God, or people who God has commissioned to share the good news? Just like if someone is bitten by a poisonous snake and we are holding the antidote and don't give it, is the company who makes the antidote to blame or the person holding it?*

Now regarding God “raising up” Pharaoh from birth to destroy him. The Greek word “raised” in OT (through the Septuagint) and the NT, NEVER refers to being raised up from birth. ~10% of the time the Greek word is referred to as raised to power/authority, given a place of authority. ~90% of the time the Greek word is referred to as raised from a position of rest or death or raised up from collapsing (e.g. 1 Cor 6:14; Job 5:11; Dan 12:2). God could have killed Pharaoh for what Pharaoh did to God's people. Pharaoh had killed the children and abused the men and women of Israel (Exo 1:15-22; 2:23-24). So instead of God killing Pharaoh, God's judgement was to raise him up every time he buckled under the weight of the plagues. Then God hardened him. Hardening is making hard what already exists. Not that God changed Pharaoh's will, but hardened what was already in Pharaoh's heart so that it didn't break under the pressure, and for Pharaoh to continue fighting against God so that God could show all 10 plagues, not just 1. For example; hardening could look like, You are Pharaoh, you are a tough guy, you are ruler of Egypt why listen to these Israelites. That's why this phrase “God used” is just before the 7<sup>th</sup> plague (Exo 9:16), not before Pharaoh was born, nor before he came to power! God didn't want Pharaoh to fold so easily so God raised him up by hardening him just before and during the Plagues (Exo 4:21; 9:12, 16). God didn't need to harden Pharaoh after each plague as Pharaoh hardened himself (Exo 8:15; 9:34; 1 Sam 6:6). Hardening is stubbornness motivated by self-righteousness.

Now regarding Esau being hated by God before he was born. Another untrue interpretation and indication of not understanding OT scripture. It is true that God chose the assignments of Esau and Jacob before they were born. The assignment was for Esau to serve Jacob. But when Esau was older not only did he refuse to serve Jacob as God commanded, but he actually attacked Jacob and his descendants for many years! This statement by the Lord “Jacob I have loved but Esau I have hated” was made by God over 1,000 years after Esau was born and it was in reference to their descendants (Mal 1:1-4). Paul is comparing these Israelites, who are not surrendering to the Messiah (Rom 10:3-4), to Esau's rebellion of rejecting God's Messiah, Yeshua.

*Verses that demonstrate that God knew beforehand what He would do!*

Firstly, before we discuss these verses – It is true that God gives instructions beforehand, before people are born but sometimes people don't follow them like the example of Esau. There are many others, like the Israelites leaving Egypt and going to a land flowing with milk and honey, yet they didn't enter that land because of their disobedience. The outcome is a result of their obedience.

Psa 139:16 "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."

- Yes, David acknowledges that God knows him before he was formed. Just like a creator of a car knows the design before it is made. But unlike a car, God has given mankind freewill (Deu 30:19).

Job 14:5 "Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;"

- What does this have to do with freewill? God has established boundaries for mankind in the law and also determined that they don't live longer than 120 years (Gen 6) and 70-80 years (Psa 90:15).

Rom 11:2 "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel saying"

- In general God did not cast the Israelites away but He has cast many individuals away. Earlier in Rom 9 and 10, Paul addresses the fact that blindness has come in part to Israel because of their stubbornness and rejection of God's plan – the Messiah. Then in Rom 11, Paul adds that they will remain like that until the Gentiles are ready (Rom 11:25). It was Israel's own rejection of God that caused this judgement on them – but God is merciful.

Eph 1:11 "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will"

- Read the following verse "that WE who first trusted in Christ..." It is an action of trusting in Christ after hearing the message, then we are predestined to do what He says. Like the message He gave us before we were born, after trusting in God we are able to do it – sharing the gospel.

2 Tim 1:9 "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began"

- The plan of saving came from God not us. He designed it and provided it, but we still need to accept it. Just like we didn't pay for the fine but WE acknowledged our error and accepted His terms of forgiveness, then HE pays it. No works except the work of believing in Yeshua (Joh 6:29). The term "before the world" means "before the human race on earth not seeking God population" or you could say "before population of the earth". Population of mankind started after leaving the Garden of Eden. The promise of the Messiah (Christ) that was to come was

before they left Eden (Gen 3:15), i.e. before the foundation of the world God put a plan in place to help mankind.

2 The 2:13 “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth”

- From the beginning God has chosen all to be saved (1 Tim 2:3-4), an invitation sent out to all (Joh 16:8; Mat 22:1-14). Those who respond to His invitation are then chosen and acknowledged (Mat 22:14).

Rev 13:8 “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”

- The Book of Life existed before the world. Who is written in the Book of life? Everyone that is born into the world, but only the Righteous at the point of death remain in the Book of Life (Exo 32:31-33; Psa 69:28; Phi 4:3; Luk 10:20; Rev 21:27), those who aren't are blotted out (Rev 3:5; Mat 7:21-24). It is not saying that everyone on the earth at that time will worship the Beast, but specifically those who are not written in the Book of Life worship the Beast. Those who do not worship the Beast will be persecuted and killed (Rev 13:10). The reason some are not written in the Book of Life is because they have been removed prematurely. They have received the mark of the Beast on their foreheads or hands and worship the Beast and his image (Rev 13:16-17). This is after they had already been warned by an Angel not to take it and those who take it will automatically receive eternal damnation, thus not written in the Book of Life (Rev 14:9-11).

*Only those who God has predestined will be saved.*

This is wrong theology - God has chosen some to go to Hell before they are born! Predestined to damnation. Similarly, God has predestined some to be saved. This is apparently based on the following key verses. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Rom 8:28-30). According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved (Eph. 1:4-6).

In Response to Rom 8:28-30 & Eph. 1:4-6. God obviously knew people would come to Him, doesn't mean He chose to know all individuals, so He planned to redeem and enabled them to conform into the image of His Son. If a person buys a Ford car, it could be said that the Ford company predestined people would buy it or else they wouldn't make it. Similarly, it is the responsibility of the individual to respond to the call of God. In Rom 8:28-30 it is specifically in reference to those “that love God” (v28), a choice they make, God doesn't make them love Him. Those who love God will accept His invite and follow Him.

This is what Rom. 8:29-30 is referring to. It is not in reference to all of mankind. To understand the plan for all of mankind we need to look at Matt. 22:1-14, "for many are called but a few chosen" (Mat 22:14). Notice God had predestined all those He invited to come to Him (first the Israelites then the rest). Many reject His invitation, and a few accept it. It was not His will they reject it, they still received an invitation and the reason behind it "I have prepared my dinner". He was surprised that they rejected His invitation and became angry. Why would God become angry if He knew they would say no or if He made them to say no. Only those who accept the invite and come are called the chosen. They are not called chosen before they accepted it. Yeshua said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Mat 23:37). Notice, "how often would I have gathered... and ye would not." Not God who would not but the people.

*What about "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Act 13:48).*

In Response to Act 13:48, the context is that the Jews were jealous and spoke against Paul's message (v.45). Paul and Barnabas respond to the Jews who rejected the message, "seeing ye put it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles (v.46)... the Lord has commanded us saying I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." (v.47) Now the quote in v.48, as many of the Gentiles there who Paul and Barnabas appointed/ordained/directed to eternal life, believed (not who God directly appointed). This was Paul and Barnabas who had directed them to eternal life (gave the message). Obviously Holy Spirit working with them. Then the Gentiles who were directed to the message of eternal life by Paul accepted it – believed.

*Does God know who will be saved and who not?*

Yes, it is possible, but in the same breath it is also possible that God Himself has chosen not to know. This is in His own authority to do and we should not base our decisions on this. Neither are we to say who is going to Heaven or who is not (Rom 10:6-7). Remember God chose Saul as Israel's king and then regretted making Saul king. Didn't God know he would rebel or did God choose not to know (1 Sam 15:11)? Another example, where Moses was promised that he would enter the land flowing with milk and honey (Exo. 3:17). Yet he didn't enter because of his actions. God could have chosen not to know Moses future, or shared His intent with Moses but it was conditional based on how Moses responded. God's intent is that all be saved. What happens if God chose not to know some things so that on judgment day no one can say "Because You knew therefore you didn't send labors across my path". To which God could respond, "I chose not to know and what is that to you! You know I am not a respecter of person's and My will is all be saved so why ...." We should not be basing our decisions on what we think God knows but on what God has commanded us to do. The key message we need to remember is that God's desire is that no one perishes but all come to repentance (2 Pet 3:9; 1 Tim 2:3-4; Mat 18:14; Act 17:30-31). Obviously, His desire/will is not being met because of freewill He has given mankind (just like Moses, Saul, Esau etc). God has given freewill, it is the responsibility of individuals to respond to the invitation from God (accepting Yeshua as Lord and Savior), those who accept His invitation are the chosen, thus they are justified and glorified.

Some get confused over the various stages of Salvation; some ignore freewill and some ignore God's calling. Paul covers the stages of salvation (Rom 1:16), "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ (invitation), for it is the power of God (God's plan) unto salvation (Chosen) to everyone who believes (We respond)".

Here are the stages of Salvation, not just one stage but all are required for salvation:

1. **God's Plan/ Predestine/ His Desire.** God created the plan, not us, He made Yeshua available to all (Joh 3:16; Eph 1:4-6; 2:8-9; 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9).
  2. **God Calls/ Draws/ Convicts/ Invites.** Holy Spirit draws people to Yeshua by convicting them of sin (Joh 16:9; Mat 22:3-4; 9-10; Isa 65:1-2). We wouldn't come to Him unless we receive an invitation through others (Rom 10:14-15). We are laborers together with God – a choice (1 Cor 3:9; Mat 28:18-20).
  3. **We Respond/ Freewill.** People have an opportunity to accept Yeshua or reject Him, God doesn't make them call upon Him (Act 17:30; Joh 6:28-29; Rom 9:32-33; 10:9-10, 13, 17; Mat 11:28; 23:37; 1 Pet 1; Mat 22:5-6; Eph 1:12; 1 Tim 4:10). IF they accept, they are chosen by God (Mat 22:10, 14). If they reject, they are rejected by God (Joh 3:36; Mat 22:8; Isa 65:12).
  4. **Chosen / Elect** (Mat 22:14). The chosen are justified and glorified (Rom 8:30). They are sealed and empowered by Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13; Act 2:38) and to do good works as they were predestined to do (Eph 2:8-10), ultimately conformed into the image of His Son Yeshua (Rom 8:29). Therefore, the chosen are a result of the predestined plan of God (Eph 1:5).
-