

I don't have enough **FAITH**
to be an **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

Why Didn't God Create a Universe Where Everyone Believed?

(July 23, 2024)

Ladies and gentlemen, last week on this podcast we were tackling a question from John about Romans chapter nine. And there's much in Romans chapter nine that many Calvinists try and say, well, man doesn't really have free choice. God makes all the choices. God has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy and compassion on whom He wants to have compassion. You hardened Pharaoh's heart. Who are you to talk back to God and all this?

And a lot of Christians go, oh man, that really seems like we don't have any free will. And God makes all the choosing, does all the choices, and now we can't recant. We can't recant. We don't want to recant. We can't go back and go through everything we did for the past 45 minutes in the last program. That's 45 minutes long.

So, I'm just going to pick it up where we left off with a very, very kind of brief summary. We were talking about Romans chapter nine, and I tried to make the case that Romans chapter nine is not talking about the election of individuals to salvation, it's talking about the election of the nation of Israel.

So, we went through that case, and we also pointed out that several places in the Scriptures it talks about that God doesn't want anybody to be lost. He wants all to be saved. And so, we ask the question, if God wants all to be saved, and the Calvinists are right that God does all the saving, then why isn't everyone saved? That would appear to be a contradiction, and I think it's not a contradiction because Calvinists are interpreting the passages wrongly. And we went through some reasons why in the last, in the last show, we're going to pick it up here.

In fact, I want to point out that when we go toward the end of Romans chapter nine, Paul says this in verse 30. What then shall we say? That the Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith. But Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they had pursued it not by faith, as if it were by works. He's pointing out again, the issue is the Israelites didn't have faith.

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And if the Calvinists are right, it would make absolutely no sense for Paul to say here that, well, the reason that Israel isn't saved is because they went about it by works when if they had gone about it by faith, they would have had faith because God had given them that faith. Well, why didn't God just give him the faith then. If God gives us faith, why is He lambasting or at least scolding Israel?

In fact, why did He do it throughout the Old Testament? If God just gives people faith, why is He saying, you guys don't have faith? Get it, repent, and believe. Because human beings have a free choice. That's why. And then in chapter ten, Paul says, brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. See, Paul wants them to be saved. That's why he's taken this three chapter detour in the book of Romans.

Verse two of chapter 10 says, for I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge, since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own. They did not submit to God's righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who is chosen by God. No, for everyone who believes.

Why didn't they believe? Because they did not submit to God's righteousness, not because God didn't choose them. In fact, the whole point of Romans nine is God did choose them to be the nation through which He was going to save the world. But individuals still needed to trust in Jesus. In fact, that's why Paul's going on and on about, you got to come to God by faith, not by works. So, the kind of election Romans 9 is talking about is the election of the nation of Israel, not the election of individuals to salvation.

And then last week, we went through the knowledge that Moses had of the Egyptian culture and religious practices. That's where the hardening of the heart comes from. Because if you hardened Pharaoh's heart, it meant he wasn't going to make it in the afterlife because his heart was going to be heavier than a feather, and that meant his heart was going to be devoured by the demon goddess Ammit. And then we pointed out in chapter eleven that the clincher here is when Paul says in Romans 11:28, as far as the Gospel is concerned, they, meaning Israel, are enemies on your account.

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But as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs. So, he's bifurcating. He's separating the Gospel from election. You can't do that. If this election is to the Gospel, it's obviously not to the Gospel. It's the election of the nation of Israel to bring forth the nation through whom God was going to save the whole world. And then we went through the passages in Ephesians pointing out that predestined doesn't mean you don't have a choice. It essentially means that once you make the choice, once you believe, once you're in Christ, you're guaranteed to be glorified. We also dealt with some passages in John, chapter six.

And there was an entire debate on John 6:44 between Leighton Flowers and James White. We'll put that in the show notes. And this is about the place we ended last week where we said, even if God is electing people to salvation, it really is unavoidable because any universe God elects to create, He knows the outcome. But He's not doing it against our free choice. He's doing it in accord with our free choice. In fact, that's what 1 Peter, chapter one says. The very first and second verse says this. Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ to God's elect, strangers in the world scattered throughout Pontus Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

Here's the key phrase. Who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through the sanctifying work of the spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by His blood. Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God. Now, the Bible is written from our perspective. It's foreknowledge from our perspective, but it's just knowledge to God's perspective. God doesn't have to look down the corridor of time and go, gee, I wonder. Let me see what those guys are going to do. He already knows. He knows all things.

He's infinite, which means He knows everything there is to know, including what you're going to do. Oh, but I don't have free will. No, you have free will to do what you're going to do. God just knows how you're freely going to do what you're going to do. He knows the free choices you're going to make. You still have free will. Just because God knows what you're freely going to do doesn't mean you don't have free will. We unpacked this more in the last program.

So, you've got to go back and listen to the last program. And for people to say that, well, you're negating the sovereignty of God if you give people free will, I think that's absolute nonsense. In fact, I think God is so sovereign that He can get His will done through our free will. If you're saying in order for God to remain sovereign, He can't give other creatures free will, that's not a

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very sovereign God. You're saying there's something God can't do that's logically possible. Why can't He sovereignly give us free will? Suppose He sovereignly decides to do that? Who are you to say He can't?

Apparently, that's what He's done. Because you can't have love without free will. In fact, we'll unpack that more in a minute. To say that God must be a puppet master, that He has to make all the choices for us to get His will done, I think, is to diminish the power and the glory of God. I mean, Leighton Flowers has an analogy here. He says, who is the more glorious chess master? The one who can beat you no matter what you do, no matter what move you make or the one that has to tell you where to move in order to beat you?

Obviously, the more glorious chess master is the one who can allow you to make any move you want and He's still going to win. Not the guy who says, in order for me to beat you, I've got to basically move the pieces for you. That wouldn't be very glorious. Or imagine a football team. What's a more glorious football team? The one that beats you no matter what plays you run, or the one that in order to beat you, takes your free will away by telling you what plays to run so they can be ready and stop them?

Obviously, the more glorious football team is the one that can give you all the freedom you want and still beat you down, still win. That brings more glory to God. Not that he has to control everything and take free will away from you. God is so sovereign that He can get his will done through our free will. So, yes, God elected to create this universe. And in that sense, He predestined the outcome. He guaranteed the outcome. It's guaranteed. Why? Because He knew what we'd do. But He did it in accord with our free will, not against our free will. Billy Graham freely chose to follow Jesus.

So far, Richard Dawkins has freely chose to reject Jesus. Both are freely doing what they're doing, and yet both, God always knew what they would do. He always knew Billy Graham would believe, and He always knew Richard Dawkins wouldn't, at least to this point. Who knows? Maybe Richard Dawkins will come around. He's speaking a lot more favorably about Christianity lately. You never know.

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Now, you might say, well, I've got to point out one other passage here. We've already in the last podcast we talked about some passages that talk about how God wants everyone to be saved. We talk about Ezekiel 18:32, for I take a no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord. Repent and live. Second Peter 3:9 says, the Lord is slack, not concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long suffering toward us. In other words, He's patient with us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Well, I also mentioned 1 Timothy 2. I'm going to read an expanded section of 1 Timothy 2, a few more verses than what I read last time because I think it provides more context. Here's how 1 Timothy 2 starts. I urge then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for all people, for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. Let me stop right there, ladies and gentlemen. That applies to our country right now.

Okay, we're just coming out of the Republican convention. In fact, as I'm recording this, I'm recording this on Thursday, July 18. So, it hasn't ended yet. As you're listening to this, I haven't heard President Trump's address. I don't know how it ultimately turned out, and I don't know that Biden's out of the race yet. If you're listening to this on Tuesday, sources are saying he's out already. In any event, this is a time of upheaval, quite obviously.

President Trump was almost murdered last week, and there are all sorts of questions. We did a podcast on it last week. Regardless of all that, we all ought to be praying for anybody involved, all of our leaders: Trump, Biden, Harris, anybody in the Senate, in the Congress, any of our governors, and state and local officials. We ought to be praying for everyone. Why? That we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. A good government is conducive to that.

And we should pray for everybody, not just so we can live peaceful and quiet lives, but because we care about people and want them to know the truth and want us to lead us well. Anyway, the next verse says this. This is good that you're praying for these people. It pleases God our savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and man. The man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all people. It doesn't say He gave Himself as a ransom for just some.

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He gave Himself as a ransom for all people. Now, not all people accept the ransom, but God has provided it. You know, this is one of the problems with the Calvinistic view. You know, the Calvinistic TULIP. You've probably heard the TULIP acronym, you know, t, total depravity. U, unconditional election. Well, the L is limited atonement that God only died for some people. This isn't what this verse says. God died for all people. He gave himself as a ransom for all people.

In fact, probably the most famous verse in the Bible, for God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. It doesn't say, for God so loved the elect. He loved the world. And that's important because it tells you something about the nature of God. So, if God wants all to be saved, then why isn't everyone saved? And the answer is free will. Now you might ask, well, why aren't more saved? Why couldn't God have created a universe where everyone believed?

Well, that's logically possible, but it's probably not actually achievable with free creatures. Because even an all-powerful God can't force free creatures to do what He wants because that would be a contradiction. When we say God is all powerful, what we mean is God can do whatever is logically possible. But even God can't do logically impossible things. Like He can't create a square, circle. Doesn't exist. Can't create a married bachelor. Doesn't exist. I know some guys try, but no. Can't create a five-sided triangle. Doesn't exist. Can't create an honest politician.

Yeah, there are some things that are just too hard for God, okay? In fact, you can do some things that God can't do. What can you do? Well, you can lie. God can't lie. If He could lie, he wouldn't be the standard of truth. You can go out of existence, God can't. You can change. God can't. What's He going to change from? He's already a perfect being. Any change would necessitate a move from perfection to imperfection.

So, God can't force free creatures to do what He wants, but He can create a world of free creatures where some of them believe freely and some of them don't. And that's the world God chose to create. Is God obligated not to create because some people He creates don't believe? Are those non-believers given veto power over God's creation? I don't think so. Why does that make any sense? The people who don't believe freely, don't believe.

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Again, if you take free will away, you're creating all sorts of problems. In fact, here are some of the problems. Well, before I do it, before I get there, let me just point out what God actually did. He created a world of free creatures where the maximum number of people believe, and the minimum number of people don't believe. And He knew that before he created this universe. He knew some would believe and some wouldn't. And so, that's the universe we have, and people are freely believing and freely rejecting. God wants all of them to believe, but some of them don't because they have free will.

Now, what are the stakes of believing in this hard five-point Calvinism? What are the implications? Well, my co-author, Dr. Norman Geisler, who dealt in this manner quite a bit. In fact, he wrote a book on it called 'Chosen But Free,' a great book to get, if you want to get into this in much more detail. He pointed out that he's had several people come to him who were just depressed with fatalism. Even pastors, there's been pastors he's known that one pastor is about to give up being a pastor until he read 'Chosen but Free.' And he said, just liberated my mind because I really thought, why am I even doing evangelism if God is pulling all the strings? What's the point? Yeah, exactly.

Now, this doesn't necessarily prove Calvinism's false. It's just a real big negative implication of it. Well, actually, I might say that the real hard five-point Calvinism, if true, would be impossible to prove. Why? Because if God makes all our choices for us, then He's making the choice for what we believe. If He's making the choice for what we believe, that would mean that some people are believing false things and God is giving them those false thoughts. So, now God is a deceiver. So, how can we trust a deceiver at all?

So, this is a problem if God is giving us all our thoughts. Now, to be fair, one of the great five-point Calvinists was R.C. Sproul. And I love R.C. Sproul. I mean, he passed away six, seven years ago. He was a great teacher. And what he said, he basically said we do have free will to make certain choices, but not the free will to choose God. So, Dr. Sproul's position appeared to be less deterministic than, say, the materialistic atheists who say that we're just like moist robots.

They will say that God gave, or they would say that physics gave us all our thoughts, where maybe the hard five point Calvinist will say God gave us all our thoughts. But Sproul has kind of taken a middle position saying no, no, no. We still have the free will to make some choices, just

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not the choice to choose Jesus. Now, that would appear to me to be really kind of arbitrary. Why would God give us the free will to make choices that aren't as momentous, certainly not the most momentous choice we could ever make, whether or not to follow Jesus. Why would He give us free will to do the more trivial choices but not the ultimate choice? That doesn't seem to make sense. And in fact, here's the problem.

It makes God, Calvinism does, this hard five-point Calvinism, the author of evil. Because if God is giving us, is making all our choices, if we don't really have free will, then God is the one making those choices for us. And some of the choices we make are evil. Many years ago, Dr. Geisler debated another Dallas Seminary professor when Dr. Geisler was there in the 1980s, a man by the name of John Gerstner. And John Gerstner was a big follower of Jonathan Edwards, who was also a five-point Calvinist, as I understand it anyway.

And Geisler and Gerstner were having this debate on five-point Calvinism. And at one point, Geisler asked Gerstner this question. Does man have free will? And Gerstner said, yes, man has free will to do what he desires, but God gives him the desire of his heart. So, Geisler said, well, who gave Adam the desire to sin? And Gerstner said, mystery. And Geisler said, contradiction. Why? Why do you punt a mystery when you get back to the choice of Adam? Because to say that God gave Adam the desire to sin would make God the author of evil.

That's why Gerstner tried to avoid it by saying it's a mystery. No, He either gave him the choice or not. If He did give him the choice, then God is the author of evil. If He didn't give him the choice, then Calvinism's false. So, which is it? Now, the problem here is that when you make God the author of evil, you make him more like Allah. Now, let me be clear on something here, ladies and gentlemen.

I don't want to impugn all Calvinists with this, because just because this might be true, what I'm saying doesn't mean that everybody realizes it. I mean, I discover new things all the time and I didn't know that a previous belief I had led to this other belief. And if I had, maybe I'd reevaluate the first belief. So, just because this might be news to you or this might be news to you, if in fact my reasoning is correct here, doesn't mean that you knew this. Because look, we obviously, if it's news to you, you didn't know it. I learned stuff all the time. I didn't realize those two beliefs were connected. The problem is, I think these are connected.

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I think that if hard five point Calvinism is true, that God makes choices, particularly when it comes to salvation, then God is the author of evil because he then, against the free will of the individual, sends people made in his image to hell against their will. That would appear to me to be evil. You don't have a free choice and yet God is punishing you. Now, think about it this way, ladies and gentlemen. If we deny that we have free will, then there's no basis for moral accountability.

I mean, how can people be held morally responsible for their, say, chemical reactions or for a thought that God gave them, an evil thought that they went ahead and did that, they had no choice to do otherwise? There's also no basis for reason. Why? Because reason depends on the ability to choose between at least one correct proposition and at least one incorrect proposition. So, how could people engage in debate if all propositions are the result of deterministic matter in motion?

Now this, of course, isn't necessarily the Calvinist point of view, but it certainly is the deterministic point of view. And sometimes Calvinists do take this point of view. They will just say it's not determined by just matter and motion. It's determined by God giving you those choices. Well, why has God given me a choice that's either evil or false? And of course, without free will, we would be forced to defend the absurd notion that the universe made itself. Or you could say God had free will to make the universe. Okay. But then everything from cars to computers that we made was made by not our free choice.

Now, if you want to say God did it all, okay. God's given us choices to do good things, but it also means He's given us choices. Or let me put it another way, He's making choices for us to do evil. This is a problem, ladies and gentlemen. Whether you're a determinist in the atheistic sense, where just molecules bumping into one another are causing us to do things, or you're a hard five-point Calvinist saying that God is causing us to do all these things, you've got a problem because you don't have moral responsibility either way. And it makes the author of all this doing evil himself.

Of course, this would also make love a problem. I've heard some people say, some Calvinists say, well, no, you don't need free will to love. You just love your kids, that kind of thing. Well, there may be instances where you just love people because, say, they're your children, they're

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your family, but love is not merely a feeling. How can you love your enemies if love is a feeling? You can't because you don't feel good about your enemies. And how can you vow to love someone in marriage if love is merely a feeling?

You can't feel a certain way for the next 50 years. You can't say I'll never be tired. I'll never be hungry. I'll never get angry again. You can't. That would be like saying that when you're at the marriage altar to say, oh, I love you, and it's all built on feelings. I'm going to feel like I love you for the next 50 years. You can't do that. In fact, that's why you take a vow, because love isn't based on feelings. Feelings may start a relationship, but feelings don't necessarily keep a relationship going. That's why you have a vow.

You don't need a vow when you feel really good about the other person, when you're infatuated with the other person, and all you want to do is be with the other person. You're all lovey dovey. You don't need a vow. You need a vow when you wake up ten years into the marriage and you look over at the person next to you and you go, you again. Why did it have to be you again? That's when you need a vow, and you need free will in order to carry out the vow. If you don't have free will, then how can you be held accountable for wanting to walk out of your marriage?

God gave you the desire to walk out of your marriage despite the fact He says, don't do it. If the hard five-point Calvinistic view is true, that we don't have free will, this whole universe is a sham. We're just puppets to the puppet master. And this whole moral accountability, good and evil, doesn't really exist. That's a really high price to pay. In fact, why would Jesus even need to come if no one ever really did evil? The whole reason that Christianity or that Jesus came was to save us from the problem of evil. If none of us ever did evil, there'd be no need for Jesus to come and save us.

But we did do evil, and we still do evil. That's why Jesus needed to come. And we did evil and do evil because we're corrupt, because our natures are bent that way, and we make free choices to do evil. God doesn't make all the choices for us. So, there are many other passages maybe we could talk about. But I think when you look at Romans 9, Ephesians 1, John 6, they don't do what the Calvinists think they do.

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We are chosen because God knows all things, but we're still free. He's chosen this world, knowing what we would freely do. Yahweh is not Allah. He loves all and He wants all to be saved. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son. That whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. That's true, ladies and gentlemen. Hard five-point Calvinism isn't true, thankfully.

Now, we're going to investigate more of this, particularly the whole hardening of the heart motif that Moses talks about and Paul talks about. When we go to Egypt this December, we're going to Egypt and Saudi Arabia to see the real Mount Sinai. And we're going to look at evidence for the Exodus. We're going to see all the amazing sites in Egypt. We're going to see evidence for maybe even Joseph, Moses, the Exodus, and then we're going to go and actually climb what we think is the real Mount Sinai in Saudi Arabia. Go to Crossexamined.org, click on events. You'll see that trip there.

We're only taking one bus. We're about half full right now. You don't want to miss this. It's going to be wonderful, a trip of the lifetime. And we're going to stay in the best places so you can enjoy yourself and rest when we're not out there seeing the amazing sights that very few people get to see. All right, friends, great being with you. Oh, and by the way, don't forget the online course, 'How to Convince People to Be Pro-life' with the great Scott Klusendorf. It starts August 5, and it's a course that will help you be better equipped to deal with the most divisive issue, one of the most divisive issues in our country, the issue of abortion. It starts again August 5.

And if you're part of the premium version, you're going to want to be a part of that because you're going to be able to ask questions of the great Scott Klusendorf on several Zoom sessions. Also want to mention, this weekend I'm going to be down in Palm Beach with my friend Charlie Kirk, my friend Seth Dillon, Eric Metaxas, Allie Beth Stuckey, and many other speakers at the Believers Summit put out by TPUSA Faith. If you want to be a part of that, and I hope you do, there's going to be several thousand believers there in Palm Beach. Go to Crossexamined.org. Click on events. You will see it there. And Lord willing, I'll either see you there or I'll see you here next week. God bless.

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