

# Specials – LESSON 1 Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility (6-6-23)

Romans Chapter 9 is used to a large extent by those who subscribe to Reformed Theology. David R. Anderson, PhD. wrote a book entitled, FREE GRACE SOTERIOLOGY [salvation], third edition that address the issue of Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility which is the name of one of the chapters in his book. Excerpts from his book will be used in conjunction with passages in Romans Chapter 9 for the purpose of accuracy and clarity.

## **FREE GRACE SOTERIOLOGY** **DAVID R. ANDERSON**

### **Chapter: Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility**

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There are very few subjects in the Christian realm as controversial and divisive as divine sovereignty and human responsibility. The issue at hand is not trivial. Perhaps, that is why the emotional storm whirling around these issues ranks as a Grade 5 hurricane...Like most divisive issues, there are two poles: 1) Those who claim the sovereignty of God is undermined if man has any part in the salvation process, and 2) Those who say the personhood of man is undermined if sovereignty is stressed to the point that human choice is eliminated.

So, one group says the personhood or attributes of God are at stake, while the other group says the personhood or attributes of man are at stake.

Definitions:

**determine** verb

1. a : to fix conclusively or authoritatively

c : to settle or decide by choice of alternatives or possibilities

*Merriam Websters Col. Dic.*

1. cause to occur in a particular way; be the decisive factor in.

*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*

## **Determinism versus Indeterminism**

Determinism – accepts efficient causes. (an agent that brings a thing into being or initiates a change).

Indeterminism says there are **no** efficient moral causes (*an agent that brings a thing into being or initiates a change*).

For believers in a Supreme Being who has conveyed certain moral absolutes to our finite world, ***indeterminism*** is not a viable option. Indeterminism says there are no efficient moral causes (*an agent that brings a thing into being or initiates a change*). As such, everything that happens is the product of chance.

Some people claim that life began on earth by spontaneous generation through the chance coalescence of certain chemicals necessary to form a DNA chain. (*They believe that a creation can be created without a Creator.*)

Thus, it is important to recognize that those who believe indeterminism do just that: they *believe*. The “chance” world-view is a religion, a faith. But as already noted from some of its own adherents, this faith defies reason. Faith without reason is fanaticism. Christianity is not fanaticism. →

Within the world of determinism there is what we might call “**hard**” determinism and “**soft**” determinism; or “**absolute**” determinism and “**relative**” determinism. What do we mean by all this?

## HARD DETERMINISM

### Regarding Evil

Hard determinism takes man completely out of the equation. The sovereignty of God is presented in such a way that He is responsible for everything. He is the first and final efficient cause for everything that happens. Though lip service may be paid to human choice, it is just that – lip service. →

### Regarding Love

The Arminian says God elects men **based on** His foreknowledge, the hard determinist says God elects men **in spite of** His foreknowledge. In other words, the former believes God looks down the corridors of time and knows (foreknowledge) who is going to believe in Jesus. **Based on** this foreknowledge, He then elects those who are going to believe in Jesus (1 Peter 1:1-2).

According to the hard determinism, God elects men **in spite of** His foreknowledge. In other words, regardless of the desires or choices of man. God elects some and reprobates others. He does this **in spite of** His prior knowledge that the elect do not even want to know Him. He drags them kicking and screaming into the Kingdom. He forces them against their will.

Although we can probably relate to this imagery to some degree since many of us probably stubbornly resisted God's call for some time before trusting Christ. There is a great deal of difference between *coercion* and *persuasion*.

## **LESSON 2 Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility (6-8-23)**

We have already seen how R.C. Sproul teaches the meaning of *helkuo* in John 6:44 is to “drag” instead of to “draw.” The key, as usual, is context. In a hostile environment such as persecution, the verb does mean to drag (such as into a court of law). However, in a love context (such as a father or mother for her children or a lover for his beloved) the verb invariably means to draw or woo.

**John 6:44 No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.**

**draws** – HELKUO, ἐλκύω, v.aas; ② to draw a person in the direction of values for inner life, draw, attract,

Notice how R.C. Sproul teaches the meaning of *helkuo* in -

**John 6:44 No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me drags him; and I will raise him up on the last day.**

C.S. Lewis in *The Great Divorce* [said] “There are only two kinds of people in the end: those (believers) who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those (unbelievers) to whom God says, in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’ All that are in Hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no Hell.”

Herein lies the rub. For God to drag us kicking and screaming into His kingdom is a violation of the love principle - force is not

love. As Lewis said, “He cannot ravish (to seize and carry off by force).” Nor does He want to. One of the reasons for creating man was to answer the question concerning God’s character, “Is God worthy of being loved?” The only way to answer that question was *to give man a choice*. That is precisely why we can God and Satan contending for the allegiance of Job. When Lucifer rebelled he opened both the love aspect and the sovereignty aspect of God’s character to question. In God’s genius both questions can be answered with the same response: obedience to His commands. *John 14:21* – *He who has My commandments and keeps them , he it is who loves Me.* *Deuteronomy 8:2* says God tested the Israelites in the Wilderness for forty years to see what was in their hearts, that is, to see if they would keep His commandments. →

## **LESSON 3 Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility (6-13-23)**

### **Vessels of Wrath**

But what about *Romans 9:22-23*, objects the hard determinist, which says God has prepared vessels of wrath for destruction in contrast to the vessels of mercy which He has prepared for glory. So, let’s look at this passage in context to see how some translators may have inadvertently or otherwise muddied the waters.

Read: ***Romans 9:14-23***

Before we can understand this particular passage we need to get the overall context. At the end of Romans 8 Paul claimed that nothing could separate one of God’s children from the love of God in Christ Jesus. The imaginary objector says, “Wrong. Look at Israel. They were chosen, but now God has rejected

them.” So, Romans 9-11 tries to answer this objection. It concludes by saying, Romans 11:29 - *the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable*”. In Romans 9 the focus is on divine sovereignty: the People of Election (vs. 1-5); the Principle of Election (vs. 6-13); and the Privilege of Election (vs. 14-33). →

We first need to remember that the emphasis in Romans 9 is on His election, not reprobation. The emphasis is on His mercy, not His justice. Another question in the mind of the objector besides what happened to Israel is, “How can a righteous God associate with these scummy Gentiles?” Paul goes on to discuss the Principle of Election (vv6-13). The first thing he says is that God has not gotten off course (*ekpipto*) is used of a ship getting off course). He never intended to include each and every one of Abraham’s children just because they were his physical seed.

To prove his point he cites Ishmael and Esau, both the seed of Abraham, but neither one was included in the kingdom program. Paul is trying to establish the Principle of Election here, **and that principle is that God elects (chooses a people for Himself for spiritual reasons, not physical)**. Does this sound unfair? Paul anticipated that kind of reaction. So, in 9:14-29 he defends God’s right to elect whomever He wishes. As the Creator it is His privilege. So we call this section “Privilege of Election.

There are two objections raised against the Principle of Election in 9:14-29. In 9:14, the objector simply says, “God is unfair.” Paul says “No way.” Actually, the fact of the matter is this, if God were only just and not also merciful, we would all be destroyed. For there is none righteous, no, not one. If we got what we deserved, then God would be just. Actually, the only “injustice” with God is His mercy. His mercy stops the guillotine of God’s justice. “Mercy triumphs over Judgment” (*James 2:13*).

**James 2:13 For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.**

The quote here comes from Exodus 33 (Mt. Sinai) after the Israelites have made the golden calf. They all deserve to be wiped out. This is clearly speaking of temporal judgment, not eternal destiny. But instead God shows mercy. And 9:16 makes it clear that human will and human works can make no demands on God's mercy. God sovereignly bestows His mercy as He sees fit. That is His right, His prerogative, His privilege.

God had mercy on the Israelites, but not on the Egyptians... In Pharaoh's case justice was carried out. Pharaoh got what he deserved. That was justice. In Moses' case and in the case of the Israelites who were allowed to live, they got "injustice" – they got mercy, something they did not deserve.

But now we get the objector's second objection (9:19). In the first one, he said God is unfair. In this one, he says God is responsible for sin. The argument goes something like this:

*If God hardened Pharaoh's heart, then how can God hold Pharaoh responsible in the final judgment for his actions and his disbelief? Actually, God is responsible. Since He's the most powerful force in the universe, no one can oppose His will. And if God wills my mind to be hardened, then He's responsible, not I.*

Does this sound familiar? God is being accused of being a "hard" determinist (God does everything so He is responsible for everything.) This sounds exactly like the view of E. H. Palmer in his defense of Dortian (Five Point) Calvinism:

Foreordination means God's sovereign plan, whereby He decides all that is to happen in the entire universe... He decides and causes all things to happen that do happen... He has foreordained everything....



the moving of a finger, the beating of a heart, the laughter of a girl, the mistake of a typist – even sin.

So if God has so willed it and His will is irresistible, then God is responsible for sin and all the evil in the world. This is the thinking of the objector in v. 19.

**Romans 9:19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"**

What is Paul's answer? Actually, the answer comes in the next chapter but for the time being Paul does not answer the objector. Instead, he admonishes him for his brashness in even asking such a question for bringing to his own level. Does a pot have the right to question how it is being made? The potter has the sovereign right to make the pot anyway he sees fit and can use it for whatever he wishes. If he wants to use one vessel as a dog dish and another as a salad bowl, that is his privilege. The pot has nothing to say about it (vv. 20-21).

**Romans 9:20-21 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? 21) Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use?**

Then Paul applies the analogy to God's relationship with men. Some are prepared for glory and some for destruction. In short, let God be God. It is blasphemous for us to challenge Him. Actually, the man in v.19 is saying, "We humans have a better sense of fairness than you, God." In so saying, we have tried to place ourselves above God. It is really many saying to God,



Look, God, step down from that throne a bit. I have a few things I want to say to You, a couple of questions I want to ask. Sit down here - I want to give you the third degree. Now tell me this: what right do You have making me this way?"

Paul's immediate reaction is that of the parent who has just been reprimanded by his impudent, disrespectful child. He wants to grab him by the throat and say, "Listen to me, you little squirt. I'm your father, and you're just a little child. You have no right to talk to me that way." Of course, that is a small-scale model of what is taking place when the created being confronts the Creator. **Paul concludes that we have no right to question God's ways with us, whereas God, on the other hand, has every right to do with us as He pleases.**

And in **9:25-29**, Paul says, "None of this present setting aside of the Jews in favor of the Gentiles should surprise you. It was all clearly prophesied by Hosea and Isaiah. As a matter of fact, if God had acted in justice (v. 29), the Jews would have been wiped off the map like Sodom and Gomorrah long ago. God owes nothing to the Jews. Indeed, it is only by His mercy and grace they still exist." That is what Isaiah concludes.

So, this certainly looks like "hard" determinism here, doesn't it? But we must point out once again, the emphasis here is not on God's rejection, but on His election: not on His reprobation, but on His mercy. He has mercy on whom He has mercy, and He has compassion. Yes, but isn't the objector right? How can Pharaoh be blamed if God hardened Pharaoh's heart? How can Esau be blamed if God rejected him even before he was born?

And what about these vessels of wrath prepared for destruction. How does this harmonize with a God who claim to love all without respect of persons?

## **LESSON 4 Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility (6-15-23)**

### **Pharaoh's Heart**

We cannot understand the hardening of Pharaohs heart without looking at the story in Exodus. What is generally overlooked in this discussion is that many times in Exodus it says Pharaoh hardened his own heart. Sometimes it just says Pharaoh's heart became hard. And then it says God hardened or would harden his heart. How can we harmonize these statements?

First of all, we must remember that Pharaoh had known Moses and the God of the Jews long, long before the plagues began. Pharaoh was a man who had already rejected the Lord many times before Moses asked for their release.

Secondly , we must acknowledge a moral law that applies to all men, not just Pharaoh. This law states that applies to all men, not just Pharaoh. This law states that moral convictions, if not acted upon, become weaker and weaker, until at last the heart of man becomes altogether callous. The NT speaks of this process as "searing of the conscience", (1 Timothy 4:2) a process by which the conscience, a facet of the heart, is covered with scar tissue and made insensitive.

**1 Timothy 4:1-2 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, 2) by means of**

***the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,***

It is interesting to read the Exodus account to see how many times Pharaoh said, "I have sinned...make supplication for me...your God is righteous." He was convicted of his sin, of God's power to save him, and seemed to make a sincere repentance. But Pharaoh was like so many "foxhole" Christians who only repent under duress. As soon as the crisis was over, back he jumped on the throne. And each time Pharaoh did this, his heart got a little harder. Pharaoh hardened his own heart through his actions and decisions.

But the text also says God hardened Pharaoh's heart. How so? Through His mercy. You see, God could have been just and dispensed with Pharaoh immediately. He did not have to mess around with ten plagues. But in His mercy, He gave Pharaoh a chance to repent after each plague. Each time he waited for a sincere about-face from Pharaoh. And that is just like the God we know. Chance after chance He gave Pharaoh, patiently enduring his blasphemy and treachery, as Rom. 9:22 says, yet each time Pharaoh insincerely repented his *heart* got a little harder. "***Eccl. 8:11 Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil***".

How did God harden his heart? Only indirectly through His mercy did God harden Pharaoh's heart. In one place (Ex. 9:16), God tells Pharaoh He has *allowed* him to remain for His ultimate glory. God could have rightfully cut him off long before. So, it is only through His long-suffering and mercy that God allowed Pharaoh's heart to become hard.

Before we leave Pharaoh, it is necessary to observe the word used for “raised up.” It is the verb *exegeira*, which does not mean to “create” or “fashion.” Sanday and Headlam point out that in this context it means God lifted Pharaoh to a prominent state in history. This passage says nothing about being created to go to hell.

**In his** hard determinism John Calvin used this passage to support his views of the reprobate which God created to go to hell. In his comments on **v. 22** Calvin said: “Paul’s second answer show briefly that although the counsel of God is incomprehensible in regard to predestination, yet His unimpeachable equity is to be seen as clearly in the destruction of the reprobate as in the salvation of the elect. And in order to emphasize that God is the efficient moral cause of evil and men are only instruments, Calvin says, “Paul has used the word vessels in a general sense to mean instruments...” And to reinforce his understanding of double predestination, he says:

Although Paul is more explicit in this second clause { **vs. 23** } in stating that it is God who prepares the elect for glory, when before [ **v. 22** ] he had simply said that the reprobate were vessels prepared for destruction, there is no doubt that the preparation of both is dependent on the secret counsel of God, Otherwise, Paul would have said that the reprobate yield or cast themselves into destruction. Now, however, he means that their lot is already assigned to them before birth.

No wonder Will Durant summarized his overview of John Calvin’s doctrine of double predestination by saying, “We shall always find it hard to love the man who darkened the human soul with the most absurd and blasphemous conception of God

in all the long and honored history of nonsense. Calvin's determinism is so hard that creatures, including Satan, are just instruments in His hand. [Why would God create someone He had already decided to condemn for eternity.]

All external circumstances which contribute to the blinding of the reprobate are the instruments of His wrath. Satan himself, who works inwardly with compelling power, is God's minister in such a way that he acts only by His command....Paul does not inform us that the ruin of the ungodly is foreseen by the Lord, but that it is ordained by His counsel and will. Solomon also teaches us that not only was the destruction of the ungodly foreknown, but the ungodly themselves have been created for the specific purpose of perishing (**Prov. 16:4**).

Sanday and Headlam are more fastidious with the text. They correct Calvin when they write: "The Apostle says nothing about eternal life or death ...He never says or implies that God has created man for the purpose of damnation."

## **LESSON 5 Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility (6-20-23)**

### **Self-Destruction**

If there ever was a passage which looks like double predestination, this one is it. But Calvin assumes way too much when he states (see above) "their lot is already assigned to them ..." The Greek is very illuminating: Whereas many English translations use the verb "prepared" in both **9:22** and **23**, these are two different verbs in the original: *katertismena* and *proetoimasen*. Moreover, the two verbs are in different tenses and voices, and only the latter has a prepositional prefix (pro-) to indicate sequence ("beforehand").

**Romans 9:22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath **prepared** (κατηρτισμένα, *katertismena*, (part. rp) **for destruction?****

**23) And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He **prepared** (προητοίμασεν, *proetoimasen*, (v. pai) **beforehand for glory,****

Again, it is helpful to remember that the emphasis of the passage is on God's mercy, not His wrath, and certainly not reprobation. Let me explain how that works in these verses. In **v. 23** Paul speaks of "vessels of mercy which He prepared beforehand for glory." In this case, the verb is the third person *aorist* active indicative. This means that the subject of the verb, God was actively involved in this preparation of the vessels of mercy ahead of time. He was the direct agent, the efficient cause. But in **v. 22**, the verb is completely different - it is a plural, *middle/passive*, perfect participle that agrees with "vessels." It is describing the *current state* (signified by the present tense) of these vessels. The middle/passive voice is highly significant. First of all, it tells us that God was not directly involved in this process at all. He is not the subject of this verb, and the verb is not active voice. Conspicuously, there is no outside agent acting on vessels until the following verse.

On the contrary, the middle voice indicates action in which the recipient participates. The closest concept we have in English to help understand this is the idea of doing something for oneself or to oneself. For example, if I say "I washed my hands," that would be a verb in the middle voice, since the action of washing was done by me to myself, together with soap and water. In this case



the vessels of wrath *incurred wrath as a result of their own actions*. But another important factor in regard to the vessels of wrath is the lack of any indication of God's prior action. While God "pre-prepared" vessels of mercy for glory, He *endured* vessels of wrath "who prepared themselves." Translating this verb "prepared" as in **9:23** implies that God "pre-prepared" the vessels of wrath just as He did the vessels of mercy. Not so! Nothing was done in eternity past to ensure the fate of these vessels. They did this to themselves in time...Remember Sanday and Headlam's observation that nothing in Romans 9 points to eternity, a view initiated, once again by Augustine.

Finding such a view of God, a view (that claims God created the vast majority of humans to torture forever in hell just so the vessels of mercy could better appreciate God's mercy towards them) so repugnant none other than John Stott [English Anglican cleric and theologian] became an annihilationist. On this passage he wrote: "*Certainly God has never 'prepared' anybody for destruction; is it not that by their own evildoing they prepare themselves for it?*"

As for the direct middle [voice], Robertson lists an entire page of examples. He even includes *paraskeuasetai* (prepared himself) from **1 Corinthians 14:8**, a strikingly similar use to what we have in **Romans 9:22**, although it is a different verb.

**1 Corinthians 14:8** *For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will **prepare himself** for battle?*

Wallace's last appeal is to context. He goes back to **v. 20** to point out the potter's sovereign will over how he makes his pots.



**Romans 9:20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?**

He uses this to support his double predestination: "Is not the *destiny* of the vessels .... entirely predetermined by their Creator?" He then transports the idea of eternal destiny from the pots to the people, completely ignoring that God's activity in **v. 22** is not preparing vessels for destruction; it is enduring with much longsuffering vessels fit for destruction. Now if God is the one preparing these vessels for (presumably over a number of years), why would he need endurance and longsuffering? After all, he is the one preparing these vessels he has destined for eternal torture. On the other hand, if the vessels have "done it to themselves" or are "**fit**" for destruction because of a life-time of impenitence and sin, now that would require endurance and longsuffering, just as God endured Pharaoh's insincere repentance time after time. Just as Pharaoh hardened his own heart directly by his obduracy (stubbornly resistant to moral influence) and deceit and God indirectly so by enduring him through plague after plague (*Eccl. 8:11*), so God allows the non-elect [unbelievers] to create their own cauldron of debauchery and duplicity.

**Ecclesiastes 8:11 Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.**

The second verb is active indicating that God, the subject, acted on the vessels of mercy, the direct objects. The middle/passive form of *katertismena* removes God from any direct activity in the "preparation" of the vessels of wrath. In fact, just to translate as

kateptismena “prepared” is misleading. But this is precisely what Paul does not do, that is, use the same words. Why? Could it be that he has a contrast in mind, a contrast between the vessels of wrath and the vessels of mercy with regard to the actors on the stage.

In conclusion, we find all of Wallace’s arguments on behalf of double predestination far from convincing.

This brings us back to the meaning of “wrath.” We have already seen in Romans that wrath does not refer to eternity. In Romans 1:18 the wrath of God is being revealed against the impiety and unrighteousness of men who hold back the truth in unrighteousness. We discovered that this wrath is defined by the three statements in **vv. 24, 26, and 28** where “God gave them up” to the control of their Sin Natures. It is this kind of wrath which the life of Christ will save them from (see **5:9**) as they learn to let Him live his substitutionary life in them. They are already justified (see 5: Being given every o1 and 9), but they have not been saved from the power of the Sin Nature (wrath) to a full inheritance. So the vessels in **9:22** have tested God’s patience with their stubbornness in sin.

## **LESSON 6 Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility (6-27-23)**

Being given every opportunity to repent, they persistently defy the truth and are ultimately turned over to the control of their Sin Natures; they are vessels of wrath incurred by sinful works of the flesh. Charles Hodge says, “They are fit for destruction,” which involves temporal punishment/death or (for believers) loss of inheritance.

Even this word “*destruction*” does not categorically mean eternal damnation. It is the same destruction that most of the world will experience during the last half of the Tribulation Period. In **1 Corinthians 5:5**, this same word is use for the incestuous brother who has been turned over to Satan for the *destruction* of his flesh. Never the less, his spirit will be saved, yet so as by fire. So here is a believer headed for heaven who suffers temporal destruction and loss of reward. So also in 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3

**1 Thessalonians 5:2-3** *For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. 3) While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then **destruction** will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*

Again, this is temporal destruction. As always, context is the key (the use of this word in 2 Thess. 1:8-9 is eternal: “those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting *destruction* from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,” but notice how clear this is from the context.

**Romans 9:22** *What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath ~~prepared~~ (part. rp) (fit) for destruction?*

**2 Peter 3:9** *The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.*

**Romans 9:23 And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared (v.pai) beforehand for glory,**

What did we learn from Lesson 5?

**Verse 22:** God had a choice, He could have used His wrath and power to dispense with the vessels of wrath, but He didn't. Instead, He was patient with the vessels of wrath who fit themselves for destruction.

We must remember that the wrath mentioned in vs. 22 does not refer to experiencing God's wrath in hell. The wrath does refer to eternity. In Romans 1:18 we find this:

**Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed (present tense) from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness**

The vessels of wrath had tested God's patience with their stubbornness in sin. They had every opportunity to humble themselves and acknowledge their sins to God, but they persistently defy the truth and were ultimately turned over to the control of their Old Sin Nature. They were vessels of wrath because of their arrogant resistant to truth and their sinful works of the flesh.

Charles Hodge says, *"They are fit for destruction which involves temporal punishment/death or (for believers) loss of inheritance."*

The word "destruction" doesn't always mean eternal damnation. The earth dwellers will receive this kind of destruction during the Tribulation.

In 1 Corinthians 5:5, uses the same sense of the word “destruction” is used in referring to the incestuous brother who was turned over to Satan for the *destruction* of his flesh. Never the less, his spirit will be saved, yet as by fire. So here is a believer headed for heaven who suffers temporal destruction and loss of reward.

**1 Thessalonians 5:2-3** uses destruction in a temporal way, *then sudden **destruction** comes upon them...*

**2 Thessalonians 1:8-9** *dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9) These will pay the penalty of **eternal destruction**, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,*

## **Conclusion**

Hard determinism may be apparent from a superficial view of Scripture, but a deeper look reveals another picture. God is love. He wants to be loved. By withholding the capacity to choose from His creation, He calls for worship by robots who cannot voluntarily choose to love, To be sure, this is one viable view of sovereignty. A person could make ten computers and program them such that at the snap of his fingers they sing “Glory to the Creator,” and we could say that their creator is sovereign over them.” But is there any love relationship here? I don’t think so, Cooperative determinism (freedom to choose) offers a much higher view of sovereignty.

## **Soft Determinism**

Another approach which incorporates more of the biblical data than hard determinism is what we, might call *soft* or *cooperative* determinism. In soft determinism man is still totally depraved. There is no prevenient grace to offset the effects of Adam's fall. Here is no spark of good within man, which he can fan into a fire of righteousness acceptable to God. But soft determinism does not leave man totally out of the salvation equation. He still has the capacity to choose, to seek, to grope (Acts 17). There is a difference between saying, "none seeks after God," and "none can seek after God." But in saying this it does not mean he can find God or make a saving decision for God on his own. He needs God's persuasive powder (John 6:44).

**John 6:44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. (Matt. 16:17, John 16:7-8, 1 Thess. 1:5)**

This is why we call it cooperative determinism. Instead of dragging man kicking and screaming into the kingdom, the Holy Spirit draws into the kingdom those who respond to His persuasion.

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