

Logical Problems in Arminian Theology

*Can human free will explain salvation apart from sovereign grace?
This study examines several common assumptions in Arminian theology and evaluates them in light of Scripture and logic.*

Fallacy One: Commands Prove Human Ability

God would not command us to do what we cannot perform

God gave the Law to Moses, the Ten Commandments, to reveal what man *cannot* do, not what he *can* do without God and without grace.

The Law of Moses exposes sin to increase it so man would have no excuse for declaring his own righteousness. Romans Chapter Three declares that man possesses no righteousness that God accepts.

Martin Luther said to Erasmus, “When you are finished with all your commands and exhortations from the Old Testament, I’ll write Romans 3:19-20 over the top of it all.”ⁱ Why refer to commands and exhortations from the Old Testament to prove free will when they were given to show man’s sinful inability to fulfill them?

God’s commands reveal what we *cannot* do rather than what we *can* do. Yes, God gave commands that mankind cannot obey. Therefore, commandments and exhortations do not prove man’s ability or *free will*. The Arminian assumption that a command proves the ability to do a thing is unscriptural.

There may be various reasons for commanding someone to do something. The purpose could be to show someone his *inability* to perform the command. This would underscore for that person his very need of help. From a mere command, therefore, *nothing* can be deduced about free will or human abilities.

Fallacy Two: Responsibility Requires Moral Neutrality

If not free, then not responsible

Arminians assume that our wills are only free if we are able to make a choice to the contrary. This argument is irrational because it assumes there is such a thing as moral neutrality.

The entire idea of the neutrality of will is absurd. If a person’s *nature* does not determine the decisions of the will, in what sense do such decisions represent the person himself? How could a decision be a truly moral one if it is morally neutral? Can morality be morality at all and still be neutral?

According to Scripture, freedom is described as holiness. The *ultimate* freedom is *absolute* holiness. If that is true, then God is the most *free* being in the universe. Otherwise, we must say God is the most *enslaved* being in the universe because he is the one least neutral on moral issues.

Likewise, if bondage of will eliminates responsibility, the best way to avoid responsibility for our sins is to be as bound by them as possible. The drunk, bound by alcoholism, is, therefore not responsible for his actions. Should we encourage people to sin more so they are no longer responsible?

Fallacy Three: Love Must Be Freely Chosen

For love to be real, it must have the possibility of being rejected

We often hear that God wants us to love him freely, not by compulsion. He is a gentleman that will not impose himself on anyone. They conclude that a fallen man must have the *ability* to love God. He simply *chooses* to love other things.

Scripture teaches love for God is a product of His grace. (1 Timothy 1:14) If grace is necessary to make us love God, it follows we were unable to love him before grace came. It also indicates that grace is not given because we chose to love God. Grace takes the initiative. We chose to love God because grace is given, not because of a virtue or ability foreseen in man.

This premise is similar to fallacy one: God would command only what we can perform. Does God provide the saints in heaven an opportunity to hate him so as to be fair? Did Jesus have some ability to hate the Father? Or was His love for the Father a reflection of what He really is?

Since faith is a gift of grace, should it be strange to think that love must also be a gift of grace?

Fallacy Four: People Cannot Be Responsible for What They Cannot Help

A person cannot be responsible or punished for what he cannot help

If such a situation is the case, a Christian may not be rewarded for what his new nature, through the fruit of the Spirit, *compels* him to do. The nature of a person is not something he *possesses*. It is something he *is*.

ⁱ Luther, Martin. Bondage of the Will.