

Program: SS Panel 2025 1 Q

Quarterly title: God's Love and Justice

Quarterly author: John C. Peckham

Lesson Title: #8 Free Will, Love, and Divine Providence

For Lesson Dates: *February 15-21, 2025*

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Note: This color and font = quarterly text

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Question:

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Lesson 8

February 15-21

Free Will, Love, and Divine Providence

SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Luke 13:34; Jer. 32:17–20; Heb. 1:3; Deut. 6:4, 5; Eph. 1:9–11; John 16:33.*

Memory Text: " 'These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world' " (*John 16:33, NKJV*).

TUESDAY

February 18

To Love God

READ bold section

That God is all-powerful does not mean that He can do the logically impossible. Accordingly, God cannot *causally determine* that someone *freely* love Him. If freely doing something means to do something without being determined to do it, then by definition it is impossible to make someone *freely* do something. In short, as we have seen, and must re-emphasize—**God cannot force anyone to love Him, for the moment it's forced, it is no longer love.**

Read Matthew 22:37 and Deuteronomy 6:4, 5. What do these verses teach about the reality of free will?

Matthew 22:37 37 Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”

Deuteronomy 6:4, 5 4 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!
5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

READ

The greatest commandment, to love God, provides evidence that God does, indeed, want everyone to love Him. However, not everyone does love God. Why, then, does God simply not *make* everyone love Him? Again, that is because **love, to be love, must be freely given.**

Question: But how is that God will awaken this love for Him in us?

READ Only by love is love awakened.

The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. **Only by love is love awakened.** DA 22.1

John 3:16-17 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

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

Romans 2:4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

Isaiah 1:18 “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the Lord, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.

Hos 11:1 When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

Hos 11:2 As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.

Hos 11:3 I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them.

Hos 11:4 I drew them with cords of a man, **with bands of love**: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.

H7311 (Strong) רִם. rūm room

A primitive root; to *be high* actively to *rise* or *raise* (in various applications, literally or figuratively): - bring up, exalt (self), extol, give, go up, haughty, heave (up), (be, lift up on, make on, set up on, too) high (-er, one), hold up, levy, lift (-er) up, (be) lofty, (X a-) loud, mount up, offer (up), + presumptuously, (be) promote (-ion), proud, set up, tall (-er), take (away, off, up), breed worms.

From SDA BC—Bands of love.

A significant expression, showing that these bands are far different from those which men employ in taming wild animals. The lower animals must sometimes be broken into useful labor with a degree of violence; but God does not so draw men. He uses neither hard cords nor iron bands, but draws us by rational means, courting our intelligence and appealing to our affections (see on Isa. 1:18). God draws us in a manner suitable to the dignity of our nature, as those made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26, 27). In working for souls we should ever follow this method of love (see 1 Cor. 9:19–23; 1 Thess. 2:7, 8; 3:12; Heb. 5:2). Christ drew us with the cords of a man when He became man, and lived and sacrificed Himself for our good (see John 12:32; Acts 10:38). One of the reasons

the Son of God became man was to draw men with the cords of sympathy, by partaking of a common nature with them.

From: Keil & Delitzsch - **take the yoke away**

In Hos 11:4, again, there is a still further reference to the manifestation of the love of God to Israel on the journey through the wilderness. מַּדְּבָלִי אֲדָם, cords with which men are led, more especially children that are weak upon their feet, in contrast with ropes, with which men control wild, unmanageable beasts (Psa 32:9), are a figurative representation of the paternal, human guidance of Israel, as explained in the next figure, “cords of love.” This figure leads on to the kindred figure of the yoke laid upon beasts, to harness them for work. **As merciful masters lift up the yoke upon the cheeks of their oxen, i.e., push it so far back that the animals can eat their food in comfort, so has the Lord made the yoke of the law, which has been laid upon His people, both soft and light.** As מַּדְּבָלִי אֲדָם does not mean to take the yoke away from (מֵעַל) the cheeks, but to lift it above the cheeks, i.e., to make it easier, by pushing it back, we cannot refer the words to the liberation of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, **but can only think of what the Lord did, to make it easy for the people to observe the commandments imposed upon them, when they were received into His covenant** (Exo 24:3, Exo 24:7), including not only the many manifestations of mercy which might and ought to have allured them to reciprocate His love, and yield a willing obedience to His commandments, but also the means of grace provided in their worship, partly in the institution of sacrifice, by which a way of approach was opened to divine grace to obtain forgiveness of sin, and partly in the institution of feasts, at which they could rejoice in the gracious gifts of their God.

Read Hebrews 6:17, 18 and Titus 1:2. What do these texts teach about God?

Hebrews 6:17, 18 17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath,
18 that by two immutable things, in which it *is* impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before *us*.

Jeremiah 31:3 The Lord has appeared of old to me, *saying*: “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.

Titus 1:2 2 in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,

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.

According to Numbers 23:19, “ ‘God is not man, that [H]e should lie’ ” (ESV). God never lies (*Titus 1:2*); God always keeps His word and never breaks a promise (*Heb. 6:17, 18*). Accordingly, if God has promised or committed Himself to something, His future action is morally limited by that promise.

*****READ*****

This means that, insofar as God, in most cases, grants creatures the freedom to choose otherwise than what God prefers, it is not up to God what humans choose. **If God has committed Himself to granting creatures free will, humans possess the ability to exercise their freedom in ways that go against God’s ideal desires.** Tragically, many people do exercise their freedom in this way, and accordingly, there are many things that occur that God wishes did not, but that are not, strictly speaking, up to God.

if I am lifted up

John 12:32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself.”

*****READ*****

The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but if he does not resist he will be drawn to Jesus; a knowledge of the plan of salvation will lead him to the foot of the cross in repentance for his sins, which have caused the sufferings of God’s dear Son. SC 27.2

