

SEC 51: (4.11:02)

Luther uses the Ecclesiasticus passage in this section. Luther does not recognize this book as in the canon of Scripture – but uses it anyway.

“If thou wilt keep the commandments and keep the faith that pleaseth me, they shall preserve thee” Ecclesiasticus. The verb is in subjunctive mood (verb form that expresses a desire or a wish). This mood asserts nothing. Logically this sentence does NOT prove man has free will to do good. (i.e. if an ass flies it has wings. If there is free will then there is no grace) For this Apocrypha passage to say what Erasmus wanted it to say it would have been worded this way: *“man is able to keep the commandments of God or man has the power to keep the commandments.”* (98)

Luther logically applies the passage in Ecclesiasticus with Genesis 1 and 2 and the creation acct. where God gave his counsel and added commands (tree of knowledge). Man is divided into two kingdoms. One in which he is led according to his own will and counsel without God’s commands. In the second kingdom, God has not left us in our own counsel, but we are led by according to God’s will.

The Eccl passage does not promote free will but teaches against it.

We do not have Free Will BECAUSE God has given us laws. Looking even to the society at large we have laws that govern us. We can’t just simply do what we want. [my own input here] I cant do everything that I want to do for eventually it will violate some law or some person’s own desire. I will be arrested or at some point violently resisted to where I am unable. This is the same logic. I can’t just do what I want to do all the time. There are various authorities and the highest authority is God. He is totally free.

SEC 52: (4.16:55)

“if thou wilt keep” was used by Erasmus to mean that one CAN do it. Because the scriptures say “if you will, if you shall do, if you shall hear” does not mean one CAN DO IT.

Law is used to show inability. (Romans 3:20; 5:20; Gal 3:19, 24).

The Diatribe dreams that man is whole and sound. This is HOW Erasmus can suggest that because the Bible says DO XYZ, we have the ability to DO IT. **THIS REASONING CAN BE APPLIED TO JOHN 3:16 and those who apply it to universal call to salvation.**

KEY QUOTE: *“Scripture describes man as corrupt and a captive and added to that, as proudly contemning and ignorant of his corruption and captivity.”* (p.99)

SEC 53: (4.22:25)

Luther points to the Eccl. Passage concerning the desiring to keep the law. With his logic Luther shows that if Erasmus was in the right, the Pelagians are even more right.

KEY THOUGHT: “**What! can bitter and sweet flow from the same fountain? Dost thou not here much more deride man thyself, when thou sayest, that he can keep that, which he can neither will nor choose?**” (100)

SEC 54: (4.27:22)

The Eccl. Passage does not prove free will but the opposite.

KEY QUOTE: “*For that conclusion is not to be admitted, ‘if though wilt-therefore thou art able;’ but those words and all like unto them, are to be understood thus:-that by them man is admonished of his impotency; which, without such admonitions, being proud and ignorant, he would neither know nor feel.*” (p.101-102)

This is a matter of breaking down our pride. What can we do in the fallen nature with the first-fruits of the Spirit?

KEY THOUGHT: “**these expressions and the like, “if thou wilt, if thou hear, if thou do,” show not what men CAN DO but what they OUGHT TO DO!**” (p.102). [again, like section 52 this can apply to John 3:16 and those who interpret it as a universal call to salvation]

SEC 55: (4.29:35)

Erasmus was using Gen 4:7 –“under you shall be the desire of sin and you shall rule over it.” To justify that man CAN and has the choice and free ability on themselves overcome evil. The notion from this is that evil intentions can come to the mind, but this notion does not carry with them the necessity of sinning. Evil can be overcome.

KEY PHRASE: If this be TRUE then Luther reasons “**What need is there of the Spirit, what need of Christ, what need of God, if “Free-will” can overcome the motions of the mind to evil!**” (103)

If we can completely overcome the mind from sin what need is there of the Spirit or Christ or God. Scripture shows what man **OUGHT** to do not what man **CAN DO**. Cain ought to rule over his son and hold its desires in subjection. But neither did he do this OR could he do it. He was already pressed down under the contrary dominion of Satan.

KEY THOUGHT: “*It is well known, that the Hebrews frequently use the FUTURE INDICATIVE for the IMPERATIVE as in Ex 20:1-17. ‘Thou shalt, have none other gods but me . . .thou shalt not kill. . . thou shalt not commit adultery,’ and the numberless other instances of the same kind. Otherwise, **if these sentences were taken indicatively, as they really stand, they would be promises of God and as He cannot lie, it would come to pass that no man could sin; and then,***”

as commands they would be unnecessary. . . .then our interpreter would have translated this passage (Gen 4:7) more correctly thus: - 'let its desire be under thee and rule thou over it.'
(p.103)

This was not a promise because Cain's conduct was contrary.

SEC 56: (4.32:24)

The Next passage Erasmus used to justify that humanity has the ability, without any outside help from God to fulfill righteousness is Deut. 30:19 – I have sent before you . . .choose what is good. Diatribe says how plain can it be. "what is more plain than you are blind."

Luther retorts is because the word CHOOSE is in the phrase that we CAN CHOOSE? Then there is no need for the Spirit.

By the Law is the knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20)

KEY THOUGHT: "*the whole nature and design of the law is to give knowledge only. **It does not say that the law is the escape from sin.** . . . what else can the knowledge of sin be, but the knowledge of our evil and infirmity? For he does not say- by the law comes the knowledge of strength or good. The whole that the law does, according to the testimony of Paul, is to make known sin.*" (p.104)

Law – what man OUT to do, not what man CAN do. He is brought to KNOW HIS SIN. It is not by the law comes our strength and ability to do good.

GRAMMAR.

Imperative mood verbs = what ought to be done

Indicative mood verbs = what is done or can be done

Erasmus was making Imperative verbs Indicative verbs.

SEC 57: (4.37:23)

KEY THOUGHT: on the PURPOSE of the LAW "*But know, that these precepts are not given preposterously nor in vain; but **that proud and blind man might, by them, learn the disease of his own impotency, if he should attempt to do what is commanded.***" (106)

This section has repeated what was said earlier with more convincing arguments that Free will, as defined by Erasmus, means that a person can do all things. Pelagians would agree with this and they have been, at this point debunked.

SEC 58: (4.40:48)

The passages Erasmus has brought forth to support his argument prove nothing and only show forth what should be done and what should not be done.

Luther says that all the observations Erasmus made concerning Free Will only prove that Free Will can do all things without grace. Which is NOT what Erasmus was trying to prove.

The argument Erasmus' Diatribe uses throughout is if Moses says "Choose life and you will live" then this proves that we are able to choose that which brings life on our own ability and capacity. Luther says that this does not prove Erasmus' argument in fact he says that it disproves it.

KEY QUOTE: "And as to its making it, according to its own adduced similitude, to be ridiculous, that a man '**having his right arm bound, should be ordered to stretch forth his right hand when he could only stretch forth his left.**' — *Would it I pray, be ridiculous, if a man, having both his arms bound and proudly contending or ignorantly presuming his arms bound that he could do anything right or left, should be commanded to stretch forth his hand right and left, not that his captivity might be derided but that he might be convinced of his false presumption of liberty and power and might be brought to know his ignorance of his captivity and misery?*" (p.107)

The law reveals man's captivity and misery and when man discovers his misery it sends him to Christ to be saved (p.108)

SEC 59: (4.45:53)

Is 1:19 if you are willing you can eat the fat of the land (can the fat of the land be eaten contrary to the will of God?)

Is 30:21 if you will inquire . . .

Is 45:20 "turn unto me and be saved

Is 52:1-2 "awake shake yourself from the dust.

Jr 25:19 if you will turn I will turn you

Mal 3:7 turn unto me and I will turn to you

SEC 60: (4.48:13)

Erasmus makes no distinction between the voice of the law and the voice of the gospel

Again Luther says- **IF we can do these things on our own we do not need the grace of God – we have our own power!**

KEY QUOTE: "*For out of all the passages from Isaiah, it produces no one word of the law, save this, 'If you will;' all the rest is Gospel, by which, as the word of offered grace, the bruised and the afflicted are called unto consolation. Whereas the Diatribe makes them the word of the law. . . Such a one must confound all things, heaven with hell and life with death and will never labor to know anything of Christ.*" (p.109)

Does command = ability? If this is true, then free will does not need God's grace but can do by its own power.

SEC 61: (4.53:04)

Diatribes teaches MANS "TURNING" is an endeavor – Also I WILL TURN TO YOU is God's endeavor to turn to man.

Compare use of Endeavor there with Jer 25:19 "if you will separate the precious from the vile" not just endeavor is used here but the liberty of choosing is proved. In one place Diatribe uses endeavor in another liberty.

Turn is used two ways: 1. Legal 2. Evangelical

Legal= voice of the commander that commands a way of life

Evangelical = it is the voice of divine consolation and promise nothing demanding is demanded from us but God's grace is offered to us. Ps 126:1, 116:7. Mal shows for both Turn unto me

LEGAL 2. I will turn to you Evangelical

It takes great wisdom to distinguish between LAW and GRACE in the scriptures.

SEC 62: (4.56:17)

Ez 18:23 I desire sinner turn . . . mockingly Luther proclaims that Man by free will can do the whole work. DOES THIS MEAN THAT THE WICKED MAN CAN IMMEDIATELY TURN FROM WICKEDNESS AND LIVE? No.. . where is the need of Grace? (PELAGIAN INDEED: man has the power to do all things to salvation)

Ezekiel is indicating what **OUGHT to be done** Diatribe says **HAVING BEEN DONE, CAN BE DONE**

KEY QUOTE: *"IT is the Gospel voice and the sweetest consolation to the miserable sinners where Ezekiel says, "I desire not the death of a sinner but rather, that he should be converted and live." (p.113)."For His wrath is but for a moment but His willingness is life"Ps 30:5. "How sweet is thy loving-kindness O God?" Ps 36:7*

Also, grace. 30:5, 36:7, Matt 11:28, Ex 20:6. MORE THAN HALF of Scripture is promises of grace where mercy, life, peace and salvation are extended unto men.

I desire not the death of a sinner is it not the same as saying I am merciful, I am not angry, I am unwilling to punish, my will is to pardon, my will is to spare.

Romans 3;20 The purpose of law is to expose sin

SEC 63: (4.1:02:51)

Ez 18:23 argues OPPOSITE of freewill. It argues that man is in a state of sin and caddy's to its sin desperation and impenitency unless God comes in to help. The whole of scripture argues against our ability to make ourselves righteous.

I desire not the death of a sinner – preaches mercy and grace

The law brings us to the knowledge of sin – Those who have not experienced the offices of the law despise the mercy and the promise of the word.

SEC 64: (4.1:04:39)

Why some accept the grace or promise, and others reject it is not address in this passage. This passage teaches the PREACHED OFFERED MERCY OF GOD and not the Secret Will of God

God's will is sovereign and his secret will is not our concern. We deal with God in how he has revealed himself in His word.

God has a free power – FREE WILL over all things

There is a difference between God preached and God hidden.

KEY THOUGHT: *"God does not will the death of a sinner, that is, in His word; but He will it by that will inscrutable"* (p.116). THIS IS ON THE TWO WILLS OF GOD.

WHY GOD does not remove sin in all people or why there are people of ignoble use (Rom) is not for us to know. Rom 9:20 "who are you that replies against God?"

If – As Ezekiel 18 says, God does not our death it is to be laid to the charge of our own will if we perish. It is the fault of the will that we do not receive Him. But Why that God does not take away or change this fault of OUR will in ALL PEOPLE seeing that it is not in man's power to do it, or why He lays that to the charge of (OUR)the will which the man cannot avoid, it becomes us not to inquire and though you should inquire much yet you will never find out as Paul says Roman 9:20 Who are you that you reply against God.

SEC 65: (4.1:10:06)

KEY THOUGHT: **"If what is commanded be not in the power of every one, all the numberless exhortations in the Scriptures, and also all the promises, threatenings, expostulations, reproofs, asseverations, benedictions and maledictions, together with all the forms of precepts, must of necessity stand coldly useless."** —

The Diatribe is perpetually forgetting the subject point, and going on with that which is contrary to its professed design: and it does not see, that all these things make with greater force against itself than against us. For from all these passages, it proves the liberty and ability to fulfill all things, as the very words of the conclusion which it draws necessarily declare: whereas, its design was, to prove 'that "Free-will" is that, which cannot will any thing good without grace, and is a certain endeavour that is not to be ascribed to its own powers.' But I do not see that such an endeavour is proved by any of these passages, but that as I have repeatedly said already, that only is required which ought to be done' unless it be needful to repeat it again, as often as the Diatribe harps upon the same string, putting off its readers with a useless profusion of words." (117)

DT 30:11-14 This commandment which I command thee this day, is not above thee, neither is it far off. Neither is it in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who of us shall ascend up into heaven and bring it down unto us, that we may hear it and do it. But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

Diatribes says according to this passage that what is commanded is downhill work, easy to be done by us. **Why have I been toiling all this time if these commands are so easy to keep? What need is there for Christ? What need is there for the Holy Spirit? This passage teaches all the commandments are easy to follow. What use is there for Christ to spill His own blood to purchase us when we were already qualified by nature?**

Luther says that people entangle the scripture to their own conclusions that they might make them obscure or ambiguous that they might thus make of them what they please!

ROMANS 10:5-11 PAUL DEALS WITH THIS PASSAGE

Above thee, far from thee, beyond the sea – do not mean mans ability to keep them but locations

ROMANS 10 KEY THOUGHT: *“According to my grammar, these terms signify neither the quality nor the quantity of human powers, but the distance of places only. For “above thee” does not signify a certain power of the will, but a certain place which is above us. So also “far from thee,” “in heaven,” “beyond the sea,” do not signify any thing of ability in man, but a certain place at a distance above us, or on our right hand, or on our left hand, or behind us, or over against us. . . rest with him; that they have no place left them for excuse, so as to say, they did not know, or had not the precepts, or were obliged to seek them elsewhere; that if they do not keep them, the fault rests not with the law, or with the law-giver, but with themselves, seeing that the law is before them, and the law-giver has taught them; and that they have no place left for excusation of ignorance, only for accusation of negligence and disobedience? It is not, saith he, necessary to fetch the laws down from heaven, nor from lands beyond the sea, nor from afar, nor can you frame as an excuse, that you never had them nor heard them, for you have them nigh unto you; they are they which God hath commanded, which you have heard from my mouth, and which you have had in your hearts and in your mouths continually; you have heard them treated on by the Levites in the midst of you, of which this my word and book are witnesses; this, therefore only remains — that you do them. — **What, I pray you, is here attributed unto “Free-will?” What is there, but the ‘demanding that it would do the laws which it has, and the taking away from it the excuse of ignorance and the want of the laws?’** These passages are the sum of what the Diatribe brings forward out of the Old Testament in support of “Free-will,” which being answered, there remains nothing that is not answered at the same time, whether it have brought forward, or wished to bring forward more; seeing that, it could bring forward nothing but imperative, or conditional, or optative passages, by which is signified, not what we can do, or do do, (as I have so often replied, to the so often repeating Diatribe) but **what we ought to do, and what is required of us, in order that we might come to***

the knowledge of our impotency, and that there might be wrought in us the knowledge of our sin. Or, if they do prove any thing, by means of the appended conclusions and similitudes invented by human reason, they prove this: — that **“Free-will” is not a certain small degree of endeavour or desire only, but a full and free ability and power to do all things, without the grace of God, and without the Holy Spirit.**’ (119-120)

Moses is the law giver – he laid out the law before them. If people can’t see the law, the fault lies on them not the law giver. Moses gave the law, taught the law etc. it was plain teaching. It is up to them because he has taught it to know the law. This has nothing to do with ability to keep it. It is their fault for not knowing law.

This passage has nothing to do with free will. AGAIN, this is about what we OUT to do, not what we CAN Do.

KEY THOUGHT: Free will thought defined. *“Free will is not a certain small degree of endeavor or desire only but a full and free ability and power to do all things without the grace of God and without the Holy Spirit.”* (p. 120)

SEC 66: (5.3:06)

Attention is turned to N.T.

Matthew 23:37-39 Erasmus teaches that will can act by necessity. (sarcastic Luther Statement: If you willed that we should kill the prophets why did you send them?)

KEY QUOTE: *“Why does Christ in useless tears weep over those as though they could have will that which He certainly knew they could not will?”* (p.121)

1 Tim 6:16 some things of God are inaccessible

KEY QUOTE: *“The God Incarnate, then, here speaks thus — “I WOULD and THOU WOULDST NOT!” The God Incarnate, — I say, was sent for this purpose — that He might desire, speak, do, suffer, and offer unto all, all things that are necessary unto salvation, although He should offend many, who, being either left or hardened by that secret will of Majesty, should not receive Him thus desiring, speaking, doing, and offering: as John i. 5, saith, “The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.” And again, “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” (11.) It belongs also to this same God Incarnate, to weep, to lament, and to sigh over the perdition of the wicked, even while that will of Majesty, from purpose, leaves and reprobates some, that they might perish. Nor does it become us to inquire why He does so, but to revere that God who can do, and wills to do, such things.”* (121)

God weeps over the perdition of the wicked even at the **same time can have a will and purpose that reprobates some.**

Luther spends effort in this section on the secret will of God and points to 1 Tim 6:16. He also closes this section concerning this SECRET WILL of God in reference to the killing the prophets of God.

KEY THOUGH: ***“For it is well known among Christians, that all things were done by the prophets in the name of Christ to come, who was promised that He should become Incarnate: so that, whatever has been offered unto men by the ministers of the word from the foundation of the world, may be rightly called, the Will of Christ.”*** (122)

SEC 67: (5.8:08)

Roman 9:19 Why does God find fault (with us) who can resist God’s will?

Is 58:2 is also quoted –

THE PURPOSE of this SECTION is to further deal with the secret will of God and sometimes we can’t figure it out and in such circumstances we should stand in reverence and awe and worship

SEC 68: (5.10:23)

Matthew 19:17 If you will keep commands you can enter into eternal life.

DOES IF YOU WILL = YOU HAVE THE WILL?

Erasmus believes that without grace will can’t do anything good but serve sin. This is a repeated Luther Argument. Either the will is free, or it is not free. As stated earlier, Erasmus seems to say two opposing things that the will needs grace and the will has ability to act good. (back to definition SECTION 48)

KEY QUOTE FROM **ERASMUS WORK**: *“If you will be perfect, if anyone will come after me, he that will save his life, if you love me, if you shall continue. In a word as I have said before, let all the conditional ifs and all the imperative verbs be collected together- all these precepts stand coldly useless if nothing be attributed to the human will.”* (p.123)

Again the same argument about will and ability is used. (See sec 55 and so on)

KEY QUOTE: ***“If thou wilt stand in competition with David, thou must of necessity produce Psalms like his. Here are plainly signified things impossible to our own powers, although, by divine power, all these things may be done. So it is in the Scriptures that by such expressions it might be shown what we cannot do ourselves but what can be done in us by the power of God.”*** (p.124)

The BIBLE saying IF THOU WILL does not mean we CAN.

IT is God who gives us the ability to keep the commands. If you desire, if you will, if you be so with God he shall design to give you his will to keep the commandments and you will be saved.

SEC 69: (5.15:24)

The third particular (I have not kept count sadly) concerns merit or reward.

THE FREQUENT ARGUMENT by Luther is that if our free will can will something meriting heaven then CHRIST and The SPIRIT are NOTHING because there is no need of them. WHY DO WE NEED THEM? WE CAN ACCOMPLISH GOOD ON OUR OWN!

KEY QUOTE: “. . . that we may also see, how weak, arguments drawn from human authority are in divine things, where the authority of God alone avails.” (p125)

Matthew 5:12. Great is your reward in heaven. This is used by Erasmus to point that our free will can illicit good and be rewarded for it.

Luther will address two things: 1. Precepts of the N.T. and 2. Merit

N.T. has promises and exhortation. (Old laws and threatenings)

PROMISES —N.T. the Gospel is preached (the word, and the Spirit of grace, remission of sins obtained to us By Christ) All of these are free. Given by God the Father through His favor on creatures that deserve damnation.

EXHORTATIONS — how those who have received God’s grace live in the Spirit with fruits of Spirit etc. showing their righteousness they have received. This is sum of N.T.

KEY THOUGHT: Erasmus understands little of this matter for. . .” *can’t make any distinction from the Old Testament and the new, for it can see nothing any where but precepts by which men are formed to good manners only. But what the new birth is, the new creature, regeneration and the whole work of the Spirit, of all this it sees nothing whatever. So that I am struck with wonder and astonishment that the man who has spent so much time and study upon these things, should now so little about them.*” (p.126) CofC!

Rejoice and be glad for great is your reward in heaven agrees with free will about as much as light does with darkness. The apostles were stationed in the ministry of the word. They had been given God’s grace to fulfill these things.

SEC 70: (5.19:20)

Merit is a promise – does not indicated if we can do the thing to get the reward.

It is not like if you swim you will not drown.

KEY THOUGHT: LOGIC – Necessity has neither Merit NOr REWARD (p. 126)

The Prize is set before the run: therefore, all can so run as to obtain that prize.

if Caesar shall conquer the Turks, he will gain the kingdom of Syria therefore, Caesar can conquer and does conquer. (p.126)

If free will gain dominion over sin it will be holy before the Lord; therefore, free will is holy before the Lord.

Necessity of Compulsion: State of being forced to do something

Necessity of Immutability: not capable of change

Who would bestow a reward upon someone unwilling to work?

Yet those who DO good or bad then whatever reward they get is deserved (Prov 24:12).

KEY QUOTE: *“If you speak of the worthiness, there is no merit, no reward. For if Free will cannot of itself will good, but will good by grace alone, (for we are speaking of Free will apart from grace and inquiring into the power which properly belongs to each) who does not see that that good will, merit and reward belong to grace alone.”* (p.127)

Key argument here in this section is that because the Bible says if you so ___ you get ___ makes no implications as to what MOTIVE is in the person. It does not mean that person CAN.

Matthew 25:34 “rec the kingdom which was prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” How can they merit that which is theirs and prepared for them before they had existed? So that we might much more rightly say, the kingdom of God merits us to its possessors. PLACES MERIT WHERE MANY PLACE REWARD AND THE REWARD WHERE MANY PLACE MERIT. **The kingdom of God is not merited but prepared and the sons of the kingdom are before prepared for the kingdom”**

SEC 71: (5.24:37)

QUESTION: What about all the passages that speak about threaten Hell and Promise Heaven? (Rom 2:6-7)

ANSWER: the consequence of reward is proved by these passages and says nothing of merit

Words of the law are for our instructions, what to do and what not to do

Words of reward are for our exhortation and threatening – by which we are animated, . . . comforted, persevere to conquer. (1 Co 15:58; Gen 15:1)

My reward is IN Christ (because of Christ, obtained in Christ) 1 cor 15:58, Gen 15:1

SEC 72: (5.27:39)

This is about hope and expectation – hope for what we may have, not feel self-merit. **That which we HOPE for WILL come to pass**

Why would God say these things if we can't will them on our own? Why is it that we need the power of the Holy Spirit to make God-ward changes and repent?

Because it pleases God that we get the Spirit through the Word. It is God's will and who are we to inquire into the cause of the divine will? Matthew 11:25-26 – Gospel is revealed and hidden because **IT PLEASES THE FATHER**. It pleases God to do it this way – man does not live by bread alone but by the word of God

KEY QUOTE: *“For God alone by His Spirit works in us both merit and reward, but He makes known and declares each, by His external Word, to the whole world; to the intent that, **His power and glory and our impotency and vileness might be proclaimed even among the wicked, the unbelieving, and the ignorant**, although those alone who fear God receive these things into their heart, and keep them faithfully; the rest despise them.”* (130)

SEC 73: (5.31:25)

Erasmus argues that Matthew 7:16, 20 works are called fruits and God calls them OURS. Just because things are called OURS does not mean that they did not come from someone else. Christ is ours; did we make Christ?

Our feet . . . did we make them?

See also 1 Cor 4:7 **“What we have that we did not receive them”**

Luke 23:34 – “Forgive them. . . they know not” proves and testifies they could not will good. They did not know good.

SEC 74: (5.36:00)

JOHN 1:12 – GOD GAVE power to be sons of God. How can power be given to them to become the sons of God if there be no liberty in our will?

This passage is a hammer that beats down free will – but even this is used in Diatribe to support free will.

KEY QUOTE: *“John is not speaking concerning any work of man, either great or small but concerning the very renewal and transformation of the old man who is a son of the devil, into the new man so is a son of God. This man is merely passive (as the term is used), nor does he do anything, but is wholly made: and John is speaking of being made: he saith we are made the sons of God by a power given unto us from above, not by the power of ‘Free-will’ inherent in ourselves.”* (p.132)

God came into the world through Christ and offered grace and works were not required to receive this gospel. A full opportunity was given to all men of becoming sons of God if they would believe.

John is preaching the riches the kingdom of God offered through the Gospel.

This passage is a THUNDERBOLT against free will.

SEC 75: (5.40:38)

Romans 2:4 the goodness of God leads to repentance. If free will can accomplish repentance, why does God have to lead it?

KEY QUOTE: “How can God invite to repentance **who is the author of the reason why it cannot repent**, while it leaves, or does not give grace to, that, which cannot of itself will good?” (p.134)

THE PURPOSE of such passages that show the impotence of man’s ability is to bring the proud to a knowledge of themselves and of their impotency, that he might prepare them for grace when humbled by the knowledge of sin.

Christians are not led by free will but by the Spirit of God (Romans 8:14). To be led is not to lead but to be impelled, as a saw or an axe is compelled by a carpenter.

Discussion Part 2

SEC 76: (5.44:50)

Erasmus tried to use many scriptures to support his view – however, Luther destroyed all those arguments – and it is left now to 2 passages:

1. Ex 9:13 – the Lord hardened Phar. Heart.
2. Mal 1:23 – Jacob have I loved Esau I have hated.

Paul dealt with both of these in Romans 9:11-17

BEST QUOTE: “**If, therefore, one passage shall defeat ‘Free-Will’ its numberless forces will profit nothing.**” (136)

SEC 77: (5.46:50)

If we are able to invent anything, we wanted in the Scriptures then where would we be?

KEY QUOTE: “**all the heresies and errors in the Scriptures have not arisen from the simplicity of the words, as in the general report throughout the world, but from men no attending to the simplicity of the words and hatching tropes and conclusions out of their own brain.**” (p. 138)

Erasmus tried to equate “stretch forth thy hand” to mean free will can do this. See and opportunity and take it. He was criticizing the Reformed brothers by implicating that they would say, only God’s grace can cause one to put forth his hand.

KEY THOUGHT: “***the Diatribe, not attending to this simplicity of the word, but with violence adducing conclusions and tropes, interprets the words thus: — “Stretch forth thine hand;” that is, thou art able by thine own power to stretch forth thine hand. “Make you a new heart,” that is, ye are able to make a new heart. ‘Believe in Christ,’ that is, ye are able to believe in Christ. . . . not attending to this simplicity of the word, but with violence adducing***

conclusions and tropes. . . what is spoken imperatively and what is spoke indicatively has the same thing. “(p.138)

Imperatively (crucial, important, vital) vs indicatively (a sign or indication of something)

How did Paul interpret (Ex 4:21, Rom 9:17-18)? Simply, God hardened Ph heart.

The accusation from Luther to Erasmus that Erasmus was twisting the scripture with Troupes to make it support what he teaches. He says that the Ex passage when speaking of harden Pharaoh’s heart meant God was giving Ph. An occasion of becoming hardened because the sinner is not immediately corrected. Luther sees this as a twisting of scripture.

SEC 78: (5.55:24)

The Diatribe, Luther accuses, does not make the scriptures clear. The interpretation of Scripture must be done by the plain meaning of the words.

Luther explains hardening of Ph heart thus: *“My long-suffering, by which I bear with the sinner, leads, indeed, others to repentance, but it shall render Pharaoh more hardened in iniquity: it is a pretty interpretation, but it is not proved that it ought to be so interpreted. But I am not content with what is said, I must have the proof.”* (p140)

Romans 9:18: God hardens when he does not immediately punish the sinner, has mercy when he immediately invites to repentance by afflictions. Luther then goes on to prove this.

Is 63:17: why have you made us to err from your ways and hardened our heart form your fear. Luther felt Origen and Jerome interpreted incorrectly by saying that God makes us err.

THEY WERE FLIPPING THE DEFINITION OF GOD’S MERCY!

“Pharaoh hardens himself by My (God’s) longsuffering. God hardeneth our hearts – that is, we harden ourselves by God’s deferring the punishment. Thou, O Lord has made us to err; that is, we have made ourselves to err by Thy not punishing us.” (p.141)

The argument then made is When God inserts afflictions, He is having mercy. When God withholds afflictions and lets us go about our ways, he is giving men opportunity to harden themselves. Origen and Jerome said that when God took the Israelites into captivity, he was being merciful to them because he was giving them a chance to repent. When he let them come back, he was hardening them? Luther thinks, and rightly so, this is a horrible interpretation.

“By an utter perversion of the common manner of speaking, will make, out of the mercy of God His wrath and His wrath out of His mercy: seeing that they call it the wrath of God when He does good and His mercy when He afflicts.” (p. 141-142)

Based upon the quote above (and a lengthy descriptive quote in page 141) Luther defines what Erasmus taught concerning hardening Pharaoh's heart. Which was the EXACT OPPOSITE of what Bible teaches.

Erasmus: **TO Harden = the indulge the wicked by long suffering and goodness**
 To have MERCY = not to indulge but to visit and to punish

This would make God's punishing sinners in hell defined as showing mercy and /sending the saved to heaven as wrath.

SEC 79: (5.1:02:33)

This argumentation by Erasmus is easily seen as putting the humanistic worldview that there is something good in a person that can respond.

Luther shows that Pharaoh WAS punished by the plagues – totally destroying Erasmus' thoughts. Bible does not say I will have mercy on Pharaoh, but I will harden Pharaoh.

Pharaoh DID repent – **but not effectual repentance and he did not persevere.**

SEC 80: (5.1:05:24)

It is true that God harden when he bears with long suffering (patience) and does not immediately punish.

LUTHER indulges Erasmus argument in this section:

1. Man serves sin out of necessity
2. God appears to be just as cruel in this bearing with us by His long-suffering as He does as willing to harden by that will inscrutable.

The thought here is that Erasmus' argument, which is meant to soften the harshness of God, is not any better than Luther's or the reformers position. In human terms and in our lower understanding, God still appears harsh.