

**SEC 111:** (7.28:05)

The passages cited by Luther against free will – the diatribe intends to refute these passages.

1. Gen 6:3 – My Spirit will not always remain in man, seeing that he is flesh. Erasmus confutes this

Erasmus says that this passage is about the MEN OF THAT AGE and NOT THE WHOLE RACE of man.

Erasmus also says that this does not even apply to all the men of that AGE because Noah was accepted.

Erasmus also signifies FLESH as infirmity and not sin. 1 Cor 3:5, 5:7 Paul charges the Corinthians being carnal – not being ill.

**SEC 112:** (7:30:57)

This section will examine the Hebrew in the text of Gen 6.

MY Spirit will not always judge in man; for he is flesh. These are the words of an angry God.

Commentary here from Luther regarding Gen 6:1-3 that the sons of men took unto themselves wives from the mere lust of the flesh and then filled the earth with violence – this caused God to bring the flood.

God called the flesh, flesh and God's Spirit could not be among them and decreed and time that He would be taken from them. (120 years) time He would continue to judge.

Noah and other holy men – had God's Spirit and with God's word would reprove and rebuke and beseech the mass fleshly ones. But they were blinded and hardened by the flesh. Wherever the word of God comes in the world, those in the flesh become worse the more they hear of it. John 3:19 men hate the light

**Men of the flesh can savor NOTHING but the flesh. Free will can do nothing but sin.**

What becomes of them WITHOUT the Spirit of God?

**SEC 113:** (7:34:38)

This applies to all men (John 3:6) all men are flesh. Jerome and Origen had argued that the flesh is concerning corrupt affection and not by nature corrupt. Jesus was Clear and their interpretation is in error. (see 1 Cor 3:3)

Flesh is contrary to Spirit. John 6:63 Flesh profits NOTHING.

Where flesh and spirit are together – they are opposed to each other –

Where Flesh is used alone it speaks of the state and nature (Mt 19:5; John 6:55; John 1:14) you can also, in this passages, say body. Hebrew uses the same word for both natures.

Roman 8:5-8 Flesh cannot be subject to God – therefore in relation to God it cannot do anything good.

**SEC 114:** (7:37:05)

Gen 8:21 . . . man is evil from youth (also 6:5). God refers to ALL men. Gen 8 repeats this AFTER the flood.

*“If I act according to the wickedness of men, I should never cease from bringing a flood. I will not act according to that which he deserves.” P 185*

Both before and after the flood God refers to the state of man as EVIL. Diatribe says this is about Most men not ALL men.

Luther gives the Hebrew interpretation – Links evil to what Jesus says in Matthew 7:17-18. An evil tree can only bring forth evil fruit.

***“Why was a time given to repent? Why does he command at all? If all things take place of necessity? He commands in order to instruct and admonish that men, being humbled under the knowledge of their evil, might come to grace as I have full shown already. This passage, therefore, still remains invincible against freedom of the will!” P 186***

**SEC 115:** (7:40:15)

THIRD PASSAGE DISCUSSED: Is 40:2 – Erasmus relies on Jerome’s words as if his interpretation is perfect and true. Jerome interpreted this passage about VENGEANCE, and it is actually about REMISSION OF SINS.

What vengeance is fulfilled in the preaching of Christ. The Hebrew here is about speaking sweet things. (i.e., Dinah Gen 34:3 spoke weak things to comfort her)

This passage is about the people who are oppressed by the law and have suffered will come to an end by their iniquities being forgiven. THIS IS THE DOUBLE PORTION.

Her iniquity is pardoned is an act of good will. This is given to believers by Jesus Christ.

*“My Isaiah stands victor over “Free-will”; and clearly shews, that grace is given, not to merits or to the endeavours of “Free-will,” but to sins and demerits; and that “Free-will” with all its powers, can do nothing but carry on a warfare of sin; so that, the very law which it imagines to be given as a help, becomes intolerable to it, and makes it the greater sinner, the longer it is under its warfare.” (p.188)*

**SEC 116:** (7:48:06)

Although sin about by the law, and where sin has abounded, grace much more about; yet the Diatribe teaches that man, doing by God's help what is pleasing to Him, cannot by works morally good, prepare himself for the favor of God.

How can a man prepare himself to do good works for God? What is not possible with divine assistance?

**THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT:** *“But however, it adduces Cornelius the centurion, Acts x. 31, as an example: observing — ‘that his prayers and alms pleased God before he was baptized, and before he was inspired by the Holy Spirit.’*

*I have read Luke upon the Acts too, and yet I never perceived from one single syllable, that the works of Cornelius were morally good without the Holy Spirit, as the Diatribe dreams. But on the contrary, I find that he was “a just man and one that feared God:” for thus Luke calls him. But to call a man without the Holy Spirit, “a just man and one that feared God,” is the same thing as calling Baal, Christ!” (p.189)*

Cornelius was CLEAN before God even before the meeting with Peter. He has not been baptized he also had not heard a word of Christ rising from the dead – does that mean Cornelius did not have the Holy Spirit?

According to this John the Baptist or His parents or the mother of Christ and Simeon were without the Holy Spirit –

**SEC 117:** (7:51:23)

Forth Passage: Is 40:6-7 Erasmus thought this applied to grace and free will. Again, pointing the justification to Jerome. He said flesh signifies the illness of man and spirit the divine indignation (annoyance provoked by unfair treatment).

Isaiah interprets himself – the people are the grass.

*“For he does not say “flesh” only, but “all flesh.” And to “people” belong soul, body, mind, reason, judgment, and whatever is called or found to be most excellent in man. For when he says, “all flesh is grass,” he excepts nothing but the spirit which withereth it. Nor does he omit anything when he says, “the people is grass.” Speak, therefore, of “Free-will,” speak of anything that can be called the highest or the lowest in the people, — Isaiah calls the whole “flesh and grass!” Because those three terms “flesh,” “grass,” and “people,” according to his interpretation who is himself the writer of the book, signify in that place, the same thing.” (p. 190)*

**SEC 118:** (7:54:23)

The people are grass – ALL PEOPLE. All flesh. Not flesh only. Soul, body, mind, reason, judgement. Flesh, grass and people are all the same thing.

Erasmus wrote that the wisdom of the Greeks and the righteousness of the Jews where that which withered the Gospel. In saying this he was affirming that the BEST of MAN was simply flesh. This Luther would agree. But Isaiah did not have this view. People void of the Spirit are flesh.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh – that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit (Jn 3:6)

**SEC 119:** (7:58:30)

Accuses Erasmus of double dealing and also not fully knowing all Scriptures.

*“Thus, the Jews, even to this day, pretend, that what Christ, the Apostles, and the whole church have taught, is not to be proved by the Scriptures. The papists too pretend, that they do not yet fully understand the Scriptures, although the very stones speak aloud the truth. . . . Just as though the Jews should require, that a portion be produced from the prophets, which shall consist of these letters, ‘Jesus the son of the carpenter, who was born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem, is the Messiah the Son of God!’ “(p.192)*

Erasmus wants it to be spelled out more plainly – To defend his position Erasmus flees to the absurdities to the interpretations of the fathers at another he relies on the absurdities of reason. When neither of these help Erasmus dwells on that which is irrelevant. (p 193)

Luther is still arguing that MAN is FLESH –

All things are flesh because all things savor of the flesh – that is, of their own and are as Paul said “Without the glory of God and the Spirit of God (Rom 3:23; 8:5-9)

**SEC 120:** (7:1:03:05)

Is there ever been someone who could by merit be good on their own? We can’t see the heart. Maybe the great men like Socrates did good for his own glory. Romans, Greeks, Jews, all have done this. We can’t see the heart; we can only see the outward works.

Even these people did good things for their own glory. Not to exalt God. This is robbing God.

*“. . .the Diatribe should still make this remaining query — Supposing the whole of man to be “flesh,” and that which is most excellent in man to be called “flesh,” must therefore that which is called “flesh” be at once called ungodly? — I call him ungodly who is without the Spirit of God. For the Scripture saith, that the Spirit was therefore given, that He might justify the ungodly. And as Christ makes a distinction between the spirit and the flesh, saying, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and adds, that that which is born of the flesh “cannot see the kingdom of God” (John iii. 3-6), it evidently follows, that whatsoever is flesh is ungodly, under the wrath of God, and a stranger to the kingdom of God. And if it be a stranger to the kingdom of God, it necessarily follows, that it is under the kingdom and spirit*

*of Satan. For there is no medium between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan; they are mutually and eternally opposed to each other.” (p 195-196)*

**SEC 121:** (7:1:08:43)

Principle Part of Man. Erasmus teaching that man has a good part and a bad part that follows after viler affections. Luther chided that under this Jesus only came to redeem the bad part.

*“For if that which is most excellent in man be not ungodly, nor utterly depraved, nor damnable, but that which is flesh only, that is the grosser and viler affections, what sort of a Redeemer shall we make Christ? Shall we rate the price of His blood so low as to say, that it redeemed that part of man only which is the most vile, and that the most excellent part of man has power to work its own salvation, and does not want Christ? Henceforth then, I must preach Christ as the Redeemer, not of the whole man, but of his vilest part; that is, of his flesh; but that the man himself is his own redeemer, in his better part!*

*“Have it, therefore, which way you will. If the better part of man be sound, it does not want Christ as a Redeemer. And if it does not want Christ, it triumphs in a glory above that of Christ: for it takes care of the redemption of the better part itself, whereas Christ only takes care of that of the vile part. And then, moreover, the kingdom of Satan will come to nothing at all, for it will reign only in the viler part of man, because the man himself will rule over the better part.” (p.196)*

(This extended quote is given because it is great reasoning.)

Can man be exalted over Christ and the enemy both? This is the absurd part of the reasoning. The conclusion is this:

*“I say this, that you may again see, how eminently perilous a matter it is to attempt sacred and divine things, without the Spirit of God, in the temerity of human reason. If, therefore, Christ be the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, it follows, that the whole world is under sin, damnation, and the devil. Hence your distinction between the principal parts, and the parts not principal, profits you nothing: for the world, signifies men, savouring of nothing but the things of the world, throughout all their faculties. “(P. 197)*

**SEC 122:** (7:1:11:20)

There is a difference between Flesh and Spirit. If a person is regenerated, they are no longer flesh. The regenerate is of the Spirit.

It appears that Erasmus on the one hand agreed with the ancient fathers that there are certain seeds of good implanted in the minds of men. At another time he also has asserted before that free will cannot will anything good. Also, he has argued that man can do certain seeds of good. Luther rightly points out that these two are opposed to each other.

**SEC 123:** (8:0:00)

Jer 10:23 – Diatribe said this passage was more to the events of prosperity than the power of free will.

Luther responds with the context of the passage. *“I, however, will shew from the scope of the context, that the prophet, when he saw that he taught the ungodly with so much earnestness in vain, **was at once convinced, that his word could avail nothing unless God should teach them within; and that, therefore, it was not in man to hear the Word of God, and to will good.** Seeing this judgment of God, he was alarmed, and asks of God that He would correct him, but with judgment, if he had need to be corrected; and that he might not be given up to His divine wrath with the ungodly, whom he suffered to be hardened and to remain in unbelief.”* (p.198)

Romans 8:26-27 The Holy Spirit Himself prays in us. This is used by Luther to show the striving of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

**SEC 124:** (8:5:15)

Proverbs 16:1, 9 addressed here. God is in control. The future is uncertain in regards to knowledge but necessary in the event. Future will happen regardless if we know it or not.

**SEC 125:** (8:7:00)

Diatribe “commit thy works to the Lord” Proverbs

Because the passage says to do something means we can do it on our own

Is 41:10 I am thy God

Luke 7:50 thy faith has saved you

Prov 16:4 God makes all things for himself, even the wicked for the day of evil

**“He creates the wicked, not by creating wickedness or a wicked creature; (which is impossible) but, from the operation of God, a wicked man is made, or created, from a corrupt seed; not from the fault of the Maker, but from that of the material.”** (p 201)

**KEY PHRASE: The will of the king cannot avoid the action of the omnipotence of God.**

Balaam was not able to speak what he wished –

**SEC 126:** (8:11:30)

This section points out the truth of interpretation. If one passage can disprove free will then all the other passages that seem to limit the will of man under a sovereign God would be false.

Luther accuses the Diatribe of taking things out of context and making the words of the Bible obscure so that the words of men (explaining the texts) can be elevated above the text. People would rely on the interpreters and not the text itself.

**SEC 127:** (8:14:32)

Erasmus was saying that “we can do nothing without Christ” because Christ is speaking of evangelical fruits which cannot be produced by those who remain outside the vine which is Christ.

Diatribes admits that nothing can be produced outside the vine. It also says that nothing is the same as imperfect.

***“But perhaps, its own adverb ‘cannot,’ ought also to be conveniently interpreted, so as to signify, that evangelical fruits can be produced without Christ in degree and imperfectly. So that we may preach, that the ungodly who are without Christ can, while Satan reigns in them, and wars against Christ, produce some of the fruits of life: that is, that the enemies of Christ may do something for the glory of Christ. — But away with these things.”*** (p.203)

Diatribes was saying that nothing can also mean a little. Without him NOTHING can be done. This does not mean that a little can be done but that nothing can be done. He has made us and not we ourselves (Ps 100:3) Did we do a little towards making ourselves.

GREAT POINT: ***“You who make it out, that the human will is a something placed in a free medium, and left to itself, certainly make it out, at the same time, that there is an endeavour which can exert itself either way; because, you make both God and the devil to be at a distance, spectators only, as it were, of this mutable and “Free-will”*** (204-205)

This section goes to rightly defining words – what the word nothing means.

Does nothing good = something good. These are contradictions.

Satan is the prince of the world – and Christ and Paul says that he rules the wills and the minds of those men who are his captives and servants.

**SEC 128:** (8:20:17)

Luther attempts to prove his points by going to the negative.

Satan is the most powerful and crafty prince of this world. The human will being no longer free nor in its own power but the servant of sin and Satan and can will nothing but that which the prince will it to do. He will not permit it to will any good and will harden it to prevent it from willing any good.

John 15:6 whoever does not abide in me is cast away as a branch to be gathered and burned.

Jesus interprets this similitude and says that the man without Christ is cast forth and withered. He is delivered up to the devil. He will get worse and worse. The more it withers the more it is ready for the fire.

**SEC 129:** (8:23:08)

Looks at place where NOTHING means a certain small degree

It has never been used in this way – Luther says Erasmus invented this term.

Free will can do nothing before God.

God causes growth (1 Cor 3:7) 2 Cor 3:6-9 The Holy Spirit increases the growth of the word in the believer

**SEC 130:** (8:26:16)

1 Cor 13:2 if I have not love I am nothing.

Free will can do something – eat, drink, have children. Etc. Luther says that free will can do nothing but sin.

Man, without the Grace of God can do nothing (john 3:27)