

...Does God force us to do things without our consent?

God is healthy. He does not demand love from men. For love to be real, it must be freely given. God offers life to everyone (2 Pe 3:9); but many do not avail themselves of the opportunity. The bible says: There is a way that seems right to a man but its end is the way to death (Pr 14:12). Grace is given for men to repent (Ac 11:18). It is not a license to sin (Jud 4).

If one is determined to sin, however, God will allow it. In the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus spoke of a man who came to his senses and returned to the Father's house (Lk 15:11–32). God is longsuffering in the hopes that men will do this (2 Pe 3:9).

When Moses led the children of Israel, they demanded meat (Nu 11:16-23) though the Lord had been providing manna for their sustenance (v. 4–6). God gave them quail (v. 31). Regarding Numbers 11:24-33 commentator G.J. Wenham wrote:

The spirit was bestowed within the court of the tabernacle, in the clean and holy area; the quails fell outside the camp, in the zone associated with uncleanness and death. The gift of the spirit drew men towards God; the quails led them away from God. Consequently the anger of the Lord was kindled...and the Lord smote the people (33).¹

God may give men what they want; but, His way is the best way. He judges ingrates.

J. Vernon McGee wrote:

God judges those things. He still does. Remember that Paul writes, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" 1 Co 11:31–32²

Though evil men gain power, God is still in control. He has used other nations to judge Israel (Jer 1–45; 52); but then he turned around judged them (Jer 46–51³). Evil seems to have the upper hand at times (e.g. in the life of Joseph [Ge 37:25–30]); but, God turns evil into good for those who love him (Ge 45:7, 8, Ro 8:28).

God would have preferred that Pharaoh repent; but, he did not. God revealed what was in Pharaoh's heart (Ex 7:3-4). Jesus would have preferred that Judas repent; but, he did not (Lk 6:13, 16). He was chosen to fulfill prophecy.

Because God is good, he leads all men toward repentance (Ro 2:4). When one is convicted of sin (Ac 2:37, 38) and turns toward God (Ac 9:35) in repentance (Ac 8:22), he can be saved (Ac 15:3).

¹ Wenham, G. J. (1981). Numbers: an introduction and commentary (Vol. 4, p. 123). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

² McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed., Vol. 1, p. 483). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ Egypt (Jer 46), Philistia (Jer 47), Moab (Jer 48), Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Elam, and the two Arab tribes of Kedar and Hazor (Jer 49), Babylon (Jer 50–51). Willmington, H. L. (1999). *The Outline Bible* (Je 46–51). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Unregenerate man is limited by: sin (Jn 8:34), inability (v. 43), Satan (Jn v. 41, 44), bondage (Ro 6:20) and deadness (Eph 2:1).⁴ Regenerate man is: made free by Christ (Jn 8:36), from bondage (Ro 6:18, 22); not of license (1 Pe 2:16) nor bondage again (Ga 5:1) nor for the flesh (v. 13).⁵ The believer willingly offers his mind (2 Co 8:10–12) and heart to the Lord (2 Co 9:6, 7).

Hell was not created for man; but, if one insists on being disobedient then he will join Satan and his demons there (Mt 25:41, Ga 6:7). C.S. Lewis wrote: "The lost enjoy forever the horrible freedom they have demanded and are therefore self-enslaved."

Christians on the other hand are getting their houses in order because the Lord is returning (Mt 24:31).

⁴ Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1996). Nelson's quick reference topical Bible index (p. 243). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

⁵ Ibid p. 243.