THE QUESTION

What did the early Christians believe about free will?

Asked by a THF member on May 22, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 16 numbered quotations · the 40 early Christian passages and 195 Bible verses we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/what-did-the-early-christians-believe-about-free-will

The short answer *From the text: says what the passages say*

The early writers taught that God created people with free will, able to choose good or evil. They said this is why praise, blame and judgment are just, and that neither fate nor God's foreknowledge forces our choices. God invites everyone but forces no one, and not sinning is His gift.

LIBRARY ONLY	This study was written only from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed at the back, with a link to read it.
HOW IT WAS MADE	Compiled by machine learning from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible only. Every quotation was matched word for word against our stored text. Not yet reviewed by The Historic Faith.
SHARING WITH AN AI?	Every quotation here comes from The Historic Faith's library. If you paste this study into an AI, anything it adds beyond these pages comes from that AI, not from us.

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POINT 1 OF 8

God created people free from the beginning

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Justin says God made both angels and humans with free will from the start, so they are rightly judged for their sins. Theophilus says God made man free, with power over himself.

1 "But God created angels and humans with free will from the beginning, so they rightly suffer eternal fire for their sins."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Justin Martyr,** *Second Apology* (c. 130–165 AD) **Source 5, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

2 "For God made man free, with power over himself."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Theophilus of Antioch,** *To Autolycus* 27 (c. 169–183 AD) **Source 8, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 2 OF 8

Free choice makes praise and blame fair

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Justin contrasts people with trees and animals, which cannot choose. Tatian says the wicked are justly punished because they fell by their own fault, and the just are rightly praised because they freely kept God's will.

3 "Unlike trees or animals that cannot act by choice, God created humans with the ability to choose."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Justin Martyr,** *First Apology* (c. 130–165 AD) **Source 4, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

4 "This is so that the bad man may be justly punished, since he became depraved through his own fault, while the just man may deservedly be praised for his virtuous deeds, since by the exercise of his free choice he refrained from transgressing the will of God."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tatian,** *Address to the Greeks* 7 (c. 150–180 AD) **Source 7, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

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POINT 3 OF 8

We become good or evil by choice

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Irenaeus says man, being free, is the cause of himself becoming wheat or chaff at the judgment. The long version of Ignatius says people belong to God or to the devil by their own choice, not by nature.

5 "However, man, endowed with reason and in this aspect similar to God, having been made free in will and with control over himself, is the cause of himself becoming either wheat or chaff."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Irenaeus,** *Against Heresies: Book IV* (c. 175–202 AD) **Source 10, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

6 "If anyone is truly religious, they are a person of God; but if they are irreligious, they are a person of the devil, made such, not by nature, but by their own choice."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Ignatius of Antioch,** *Epistle to the Magnesians* (c. 98–117 AD) **Source 3, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 4 OF 8

Two ways are set before us

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

The Didache opens by setting out a way of life and a way of death. The Apostolic Constitutions add that the way of life fits our created nature, while the way of death came later from the enemy's snares.

7 "There are two ways: one of life and one of death. There is a great difference between these two ways."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Didache,** *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* 1 (c. 50–120 AD) **Source 1, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

8 "The way of life is according to nature, but the way of death was introduced later. It is not according to the mind of God, but comes from the snares of the adversary."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD) **Source 30, page 8** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

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POINT 5 OF 8

Neither fate nor foreknowledge forces us

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Justin rejects the idea that fate controls what people do. Origen answers Celsus by saying that God foretelling an event does not cause it; the event would happen anyway, and foreknowledge simply sees it.

9 “We also do not believe that fate controls human actions or suffering, but that each person, through free will, chooses to act rightly or sin.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Justin Martyr,** *Second Apology* (c. 130–165 AD) **Source 5, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

10 “We maintain that he who foretold it was not the cause of its happening because he foretold that it would happen.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Origen,** *Against Celsus* 20 (c. 215–254 AD) **Source 25, page 8** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 6 OF 8

God's commands show we can choose

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Hippolytus argues that a law is given to people, not animals, because people can will or refuse. Origen says Christ's commands show that keeping them lies with us, so we are rightly blamed if we break them.

11 “For if man did not have the power to will and not to will, why should a law be established?”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Hippolytus,** *Refutation of All Heresies* 29 (c. 200–236 AD) **Source 21, page 8** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

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12 “And the Saviour also, when He commands, “But I say unto you, Resist not evil;” and, “Whosoever shall be angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment;” and, “Whosoever shall look upon a woman to lust after her, has already committed adultery with her in his heart;” and by any other commandment which He gives, declares that it lies with ourselves to keep what is enjoined, and that we shall reasonably be liable to condemnation if we transgress.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Origen,** *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 1 (c. 215–254 AD) **Source 23, page 8** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 7 OF 8

God invites but never forces

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Arnobius says God does not force or frighten anyone into salvation. Irenaeus agrees that people really can disobey God and lose what is good, though doing so brings them great harm.

13 “God forces no one and terrifies no one with overwhelming fear.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Arnobius,** *Against the Heathen* 2 (c. 290–330 AD) **Source 35, page 9** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

14 “For humans have the power to disobey God and to lose what is good, but such behavior brings significant harm and trouble.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Irenaeus,** *Against Heresies: Book IV* (c. 175–202 AD) **Source 9, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 8 OF 8

Freedom works together with God's grace

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Archelaus says sinning is our own doing, but not sinning is God's gift. Theophilus says the life man lost through disobedience, God now gives as a gift of love to those who obey Him.

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15 “To sin is ours, and that we do not sin is God's gift, since our will is formed to choose either to sin or not to sin.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Archelaus,** *Disputation with Manes* 1 (c. 270–300 AD) **Source 33, page 8** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

16 “So then, what man brought on himself through carelessness and disobedience, God now grants to him as a gift through His own love for mankind and pity, when men obey Him.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Theophilus of Antioch,** *To Autolycus* 27 (c. 169–183 AD) **Source 8, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

THE LIMITS

What these passages don’t tell us

- These passages do not explain in detail how God's grace works within a person's free choice.
- They say little here about how far the fall weakened the human will.
- A word-for-word match shows that a quotation really is in our text. It does not show that our reading of it is right, or who wrote each work.

WHERE EVERY QUOTE CAME FROM

The Sources

The 40 early Christian passages and 195 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–40, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 41–143, in Bible order), then 92 more verses THF links to these passages, by reference. **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are in THF’s updated English unless marked “1885 English” (the Roberts–Donaldson translation, public domain). “… [continues online]” marks a passage the library gave only in part. **On paper?** At **thehistoricfaith.com**, Bible verses are in the **Audio Bible** and early Christian writings in the **Library** (search for the title).

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS *40 passages from 22 writers*

Didache, *c. 50–120 AD · source 1*

1 *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* 1 **Quote 7, page 3** “are two ways: one of life and one of death… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Rome, *c. 88–99 AD · source 2*

2 *Second Epistle* 14 (1885 English; on point 3) “7:11 So, then, let us elect to belong to the church of life, that we may be saved… [continues online] **read ›**

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Ignatius of Antioch, *c. 98–117 AD · source 3*

3 *Epistle to the Magnesians* **Quote 6, page 3** “of God’s precepts, but death as the result of disobedience, and everyone, according to the choice they make, shall go to their own place, let us flee from death… [continues online] **read ›**

Justin Martyr, *c. 130–165 AD · sources 4–6*

4 *First Apology* **Quote 3, page 2** “of blame. Furthermore, if humanity did not have the power to avoid evil and choose good through free will, they would not be responsible for their actions. We demonstrate that… [continues online] **read ›**

5 *Second Apology* (1885 English) **Quotes 1, 9, pages 2, 4** “Stoics, not observing this, maintained that all things take place according to the necessity of fate… [continues online] **read ›**

6 *First Apology* (on point 2) everlasting punishment or salvation based on their actions. If everyone knew this, no one would choose wickedness, even briefly, knowing they'd face everlasting punishment in fire. Instead, they would… [continues online] **read ›**

Tatian, *c. 150–180 AD · source 7*

7 *Address to the Greeks* 7 **Quote 4, page 2** good, for that is with God alone. But in men it is brought to perfection through their freedom of choice. This is so that the bad man may be justly… [continues online] **read ›**

Theophilus of Antioch, *c. 169–183 AD · source 8*

8 *To Autolycus* 27 (1885 English) **Quotes 2, 16, pages 2, 6** “obeying the will of God, he who desires is able to procure for himself life everlasting… [continues online] **read ›**

Irenaeus, *c. 175–202 AD · sources 9–12*

9 *Against Heresies: Book IV* (1885 English) **Quote 14, page 5** “because man is possessed of free will from the beginning, and God is possessed of free will, in whose likeness man was created, advice is always given to him to… [continues online] **read ›**

10 *Against Heresies: Book IV* (1885 English) **Quote 5, page 3** “also he shall be justly condemned, because, having been created a rational being, he lost the true rationality, and living irrationally, opposed the righteousness of God, giving himself over to… [continues online] **read ›**

11 *Against Heresies: Book IV* (on point 4) “It is good to obey God, to believe in Him, and to keep His commandments, and this is the true life for humans; not obeying God is evil and leads… [continues online] **read ›**

12 *Against Heresies: Book IV* (1885 English; on point 4) “therefore Moses says to them again: “Choose life, that thou mayest live, and thy seed, to love the thy God, to hear His voice, to cleave unto Him… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Alexandria, *c. 190–215 AD · sources 13–16*

13 *Instructor* 1.6 (on point 8) what ignorance has badly bound is well loosed by knowledge. Those bonds are quickly slackened by human faith and divine grace, our transgressions being taken away by one Paeonian medicine… [continues online] **read ›**

14 *Stromata* 6.6 (on point 4) “behold, it is said, "I have set before your face death and life, that you may choose life… [continues online] **read ›**

15 *Stromata* 5.14 (1885 English; on point 2) “blame lies in the exercise of free choice… [continues online] **read ›**

16 *Stromata* 2.15 (on point 2) than the death of a sinner. Ezekiel 33:11 And those are not reckoned that are not the effect of choice. For "he who has lusted has already committed adultery… [continues online] **read ›**

Tertullian, *c. 196–220 AD · sources 17–20*

17 *Against Marcion* 5 (on point 1) “which could not have happened because of God. I find, then, that man was made by God to be free, with control over his own will and power. Nothing shows… [continues online] **read ›**

18 *On Exhortation to Chastity* 2 (1885 English; on point 3) “since the only thing which is in our power is volition — and it is herein that our mind toward God is put to proof, whether we will the things which… [continues online] **read ›**

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19 *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 16 (1885 English) “8:3 lest it should be supposed to be free from all responsibility by the mere fact of its seeming to be impelled by the soul… [continues online] **read ›**

20 *On Fasting* 13 (1885 English) “human volition have more licence than Divine power… [continues online] **read ›**

Hippolytus, *c. 200–236 AD · source 21*

21 *Refutation of All Heresies* 29 (1885 English) **Quote 11, page 4** “if man did not possess the power to will and not to will, why should a law be established… [continues online] **read ›**

Origen, *c. 215–254 AD · sources 22–26*

22 *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 1 (1885 English; on point 6) “will find also innumerable other passages in holy Scripture, which manifestly show that we possess freedom of will… [continues online] **read ›**

23 *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 1 **Quote 12, page 5** “was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink,” it is exceedingly manifest that He gives the promises to these as being deserving of praise… [continues online] **read ›**

24 *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 2 (on point 7) is Christ, God has power over all things, not only by the authority of a ruler, but also by the voluntary obedience of subjects. And that you may understand that… [continues online] **read ›**

25 *Against Celsus* 20 **Quote 10, page 4** the following is our reply to such statements. Celsus imagines that an event, predicted through foreknowledge, comes to pass because it was predicted. But we do not grant this. We… [continues online] **read ›**

26 *Against Celsus* 18 (on point 5) what he said. For if Jesus knew future events beforehand as God, then it was impossible for His foreknowledge to prove false. Therefore, it was impossible for the one whom… [continues online] **read ›**

Gregory Thaumaturgus, *c. 240–270 AD · source 27*

27 *Oration to Origen* 1 that fell to him, in due proportion with the other heir, his brother, and departed by his own choice into a strange country far away from his father. Living there… [continues online] **read ›**

Novatian, *c. 240–258 AD · source 28*

28 *Treatise Concerning the Trinity* 1 (on point 1) And when He had given him all things for his service, He willed that he alone should be free. But lest unlimited freedom should again fall into danger, He laid… [continues online] **read ›**

Cyprian, *c. 248–258 AD · source 29*

29 *Epistles* (1885 English; on point 3) “6:67 manifestly observing the law whereby a man left to his own liberty, and established in his own choice, himself desires for himself either death or salvation… [continues online] **read ›**

Apostolic Constitutions, *c. 250–380 AD · source 30*

30 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English) **Quote 8, page 3** “added, Choose life, that you may live… [continues online] **read ›**

Commodianus, *c. 250–300 AD · source 31*

31 *Writings* (on point 4) “for yourselves. You have entered upon two roads… [continues online] **read ›**

Archelaus, *c. 270–300 AD · sources 32–33*

32 *Disputation with Manes* 1 having been given to the man himself, the man did not by any means have the power to yield obedience to the serpent and to the statements made by him… [continues online] **read ›**

33 *Disputation with Manes* 1 (1885 English) **Quote 15, page 6** “your father you will do. And, in fine, when they are found to be actually doing his will, they are thus addressed: O generation of vipers, who has warned you… [continues online] **read ›**

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Methodius, *c. 270–311 AD · source 34*

34 *Concerning Free Will* 1 (1885 English) “in this, according to the Word, when he speaks of the day of our holy festivity, which the election has attained: but the rest have become hardened, as said the… [continues online] **read ›**

Arnobius, *c. 290–330 AD · source 35*

35 *Against the Heathen* 2 **Quote 13, page 5** “Christ came as the Savior of men, as you say, why does He not, with equal kindness, set everyone free without exception? I reply, does He not free everyone alike… [continues online] **read ›**

Lactantius, *c. 290–320 AD · sources 36–38*

36 *Divine Institutes* 24 (on point 7) “for life ought to remove every kind of excuse, so that he may place on men the necessity of obedience, not by force, but by shame, and yet still leave… [continues online] **read ›**

37 *Divine Institutes* 4 (on point 1) think they are gods because their courses are fixed and orderly, they are mistaken. For this clearly shows that they are not gods, because they are not allowed to depart… [continues online] **read ›**

38 *On the Anger of God* 23 (1885 English; on point 7) “if any one is not aroused against one who is unwilling to obey, it will not be possible for him to be compelled to obedience… [continues online] **read ›**

Peter of Alexandria, *c. 300–311 AD · source 39*

39 *Genuine Acts of Peter* (on point 4) “Behold I set before you life and death… [continues online] **read ›**

Alexander of Alexandria, *c. 313–328 AD · source 40*

40 *Epistles on the Arian Heresy* 1 (1885 English; on point 1) “Natural will is the free faculty of every intelligent nature as having nothing involuntary which is in respect of its essence” **read ›**

THE BIBLE *103 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

41 **Leviticus 22:19** unblemished males from the herds, or from the sheep, and from the goats are acceptable for you. **read ›**

42 **Deuteronomy 10:13** to keep the commandments of the Lord your God and his ordinances that I command you today, that it may be well with you? **read ›**

43 **Deuteronomy 26:17** You have chosen God today to be your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep the ordinances and the judgments, and to obey his voice. **read ›**

44 **Deuteronomy 30:15** Behold, I have set before your face today life and death, good and evil. **read ›**

45 **Deuteronomy 30:16** If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his ordinances and his judgments, then you shall live and be many, and the Lord your God shall bless you in all the land that you are entering to inherit. **read ›**

46 **Deuteronomy 30:19** I call heaven and earth to witness against you today: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, that you may live, you and your seed, **read ›**

47 **Deuteronomy 30:20** to love the Lord your God, to obey his voice, and to hold fast to him; for this is your life and the length of your days, to dwell on the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them. **read ›**

48 **Joshua 24:15** But if it does not please you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve, whether the gods of your fathers who were beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But I and my house will serve the Lord, for he is holy.” **read ›**

49 **Joshua 24:22** And Jesus said to the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve him. **read ›**

50 **2 Samuel 24:12** ‘Thus says the Lord: I lay three things on you; choose one of them for yourself, and I will do it to you.’” **read ›**

51 **Proverbs 19:16** He who keeps the commandment guards his own soul, but he who despises his own ways will perish. **read ›**

52 **Ecclesiastes 1:3** What advantage does a man have in all his labor at which he labors under the sun? **read ›**

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53 **Ecclesiastes 7:23** All these things I tested by wisdom. I said, “I will become wise”; but it was far from me. **read ›**

54 **Isaiah 1:4** Woe, sinful nation, a people full of sins, an evil seed, lawless sons! You have forsaken the Lord, and provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger. **read ›**

55 **Isaiah 1:19** And if you are willing, and listen to me, you shall eat the good things of the land. **read ›**

56 **Isaiah 2:6** For he has given up his people, the house of Israel, because their land was filled, as at the beginning, with omen-watching, like the land of the Philistines, and many foreign children were born to them. **read ›**

57 **Isaiah 2:21** to go into the holes of the solid rock, and into the crevices of the rocks, from before the fear of the Lord, and from the glory of his might, when he rises to shatter the earth. **read ›**

58 **Isaiah 3:2** the giant and the mighty man, and the man of war, and the judge, and the prophet, and the fortune-teller, and the elder, **read ›**

59 **Isaiah 5:13** Therefore my people have become captives, because they do not know the Lord; and there has been a multitude of dead because of hunger and thirst for water. **read ›**

60 **Isaiah 5:16** But the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and the holy God shall be glorified in righteousness. **read ›**

61 **Isaiah 7:21** And it shall be in that day that a man shall rear a young cow and two sheep; **read ›**

62 **Isaiah 8:5** And the Lord spoke to me yet again: **read ›**

63 **Isaiah 8:10** And whatever counsel you take, the Lord will scatter it; and whatever word you speak, it shall by no means stand among you, for God is with us. **read ›**

64 **Isaiah 8:13** Sanctify the Lord himself, and he shall be your fear. **read ›**

65 **Isaiah 13:1** The vision which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw against Babylon. **read ›**

66 **Isaiah 13:2** Raise a signal upon a mountain of the plain, lift up your voice to them, beckon with the hand; open, you rulers! **read ›**

67 **Isaiah 13:3** I am giving command, and I bring them; giants are coming to fulfill my wrath, rejoicing and insulting together. **read ›**

68 **Isaiah 13:15** For whoever is caught will be overcome, and those who are gathered together will fall by the sword. **read ›**

69 **Isaiah 15:3** Wrap yourselves in sackcloth in her squares, and lament on her rooftops and in her lanes; all of you, wail with weeping. **read ›**

70 **Isaiah 17:12** Woe to the multitude of many nations! Like the surging sea, so you will be troubled; and the back of many nations will roar like water. **read ›**

71 **Jeremiah 8:3** for they chose death rather than life—and so for all the remnant who are left of that generation, in every place to which I drive them out. **read ›**

72 **Jeremiah 21:8** And to this people you shall say: Thus says the Lord: Behold, I have set before you the way of life and the way of death. **read ›**

73 **Amos 3:9** Proclaim it to the regions among the Assyrians, and to the regions of Egypt, and say, “Gather yourselves on the mountain of Samaria, and see the many marvels in her midst, and the oppression that is in her.” **read ›**

74 **1 Esdras 8:94** as has been decided by you and by all who obey the law of the Lord. **read ›**

75 **Wisdom of Solomon 3:9** Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will stay with him in love, for grace and mercy are for his chosen ones. **read ›**

76 **Wisdom of Solomon 12:18** But you, being master of strength, judge with gentleness, and govern us with great restraint; for power is with you whenever you will. **read ›**

77 **Wisdom of Solomon 15:2** For even if we sin, we are yours, knowing your power; but we will not sin, knowing that we are counted as yours. **read ›**

78 **Wisdom of Sirach 10:25** Free men will serve a wise household servant, and a man of knowledge will not grumble. **read ›**

79 **Wisdom of Sirach 15:14** He himself made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel. **read ›**

80 **Wisdom of Sirach 15:15** If you are willing, you will keep the commandments, and to act faithfully is of your own good will. **read ›**

81 **Wisdom of Sirach 15:17** Before men are life and death, and whichever he chooses will be given to him. **read ›**

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82 **Wisdom of Sirach 18:8** What is man, and what is his use? What is his good, and what is his evil? **read ›**

83 **Wisdom of Sirach 19:28** And if for lack of strength he is hindered from sinning, yet if he finds an opportunity, he will do harm. **read ›**

84 **Wisdom of Sirach 23:12** There is a manner of speech clothed in death; let it not be found in the inheritance of Jacob. For all these things will be far from the godly, and they will not wallow in sins. **read ›**

85 **Wisdom of Sirach 36:13** Have compassion on the city of your sanctuary, Jerusalem, the city of your rest. (Septuagint Wisdom of Sirach 36:18 (Wisdom of Sirach 36:13 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

86 **Baruch 3:9** Hear, O Israel, the commandments of life; give ear to know sound judgment. **read ›**

87 **Baruch 4:1** This is the book of the statutes of God and the law that endures forever. All who hold fast to her will come to life, but those who forsake her will die. **read ›**

88 **1 Maccabees 3:60** But whatever the will in heaven may be, that he will do." **read ›**

89 **2 Maccabees 1:3** May he give you all a heart to worship him and to do his will with a great heart and a willing soul. **read ›**

90 **2 Maccabees 7:23** Therefore the Creator of the world, who formed the origin of man and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give breath and life back to you again, since you now disregard yourselves for the sake of his laws." **read ›**

91 **2 Maccabees 12:45** And then, looking to the most splendid reward laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness—a holy and godly thought—he therefore made atonement for the dead, that they might be released from their sin. **read ›**

92 **4 Maccabees 1:4** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

93 **4 Maccabees 1:33** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

94 **4 Maccabees 2:6** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

95 **4 Maccabees 2:21** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

96 **4 Maccabees 3:2** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

97 **4 Maccabees 5:13** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

98 **4 Maccabees 5:16** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

99 **4 Maccabees 5:34** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

100 **4 Maccabees 7:21** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

101 **4 Maccabees 8:5** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

102 **4 Maccabees 8:10** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

103 **4 Maccabees 13:1** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

104 **4 Maccabees 13:2** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

105 **4 Maccabees 13:3** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

106 **4 Maccabees 13:15** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

107 **4 Maccabees 15:3** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

108 **4 Maccabees 17:12** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

109 **1 Enoch 5:8** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

110 **1 Enoch 69:11** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

111 **1 Enoch 94:4** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

112 **1 Enoch 99:10** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

113 **John 1:13** who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a man, but of God. **read ›**

114 **John 7:17** If anyone desires to do his will, he will know about the teaching, whether it is from God or if I am speaking from myself. **read ›**

115 **Acts 15:11** But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they are." **read ›**

116 **Romans 5:15** But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. **read ›**

117 **Romans 5:16** And the gift is not like what came through the one who sinned; for the judgment came from one trespass to condemnation, but the gracious gift came from many trespasses to justification. **read ›**

118 **Romans 6:7** For he who has died has been set free from sin. **read ›**

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119 **Romans 6:8** But if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him, **read ›**

120 **Romans 6:16** Do you not know that when you present yourselves as slaves and obey someone, you are the slaves of whomever you obey, whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness? **read ›**

121 **Romans 6:17** But thanks be to God that, although you were slaves of sin, you obeyed from the heart that form of teaching to which you were handed over. **read ›**

122 **Romans 6:18** And having been freed from sin, you were made slaves of righteousness. **read ›**

123 **Romans 6:20** For when you were slaves of sin, you were free from righteousness. **read ›**

124 **Romans 6:22** But now, being made free from sin and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit leading to sanctification and the result of eternal life. **read ›**

125 **Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. **read ›**

126 **Romans 9:16** So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who has mercy. **read ›**

127 **Romans 9:18** So then, he has mercy on whom he desires, and he hardens whom he desires. **read ›**

128 **Romans 9:19** You will say then to me, “Why does he still find fault? For who withstands his will?” **read ›**

129 **Romans 13:5** Therefore you need to be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience’ sake. **read ›**

130 **Romans 14:12** So then each one of us will give account of himself to God. **read ›**

131 **1 Corinthians 3:9** For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building. **read ›**

132 **1 Corinthians 4:1** Let a man regard us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries. **read ›**

133 **1 Corinthians 9:17** For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward. But if not of my own will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me. **read ›**

134 **2 Corinthians 8:3** For according to their ability, I testify, and beyond their ability, they gave willingly, **read ›**

135 **2 Corinthians 8:11** But now also finish doing it, so that, just as you were willing, you may also complete it from what you have. **read ›**

136 **2 Corinthians 10:6** and being in readiness to avenge all disobedience when your obedience is made full. **read ›**

137 **Galatians 5:1** Stand firm therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of slavery. **read ›**

138 **Galatians 5:13** For you, brothers, were called for freedom. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be slaves to one another. **read ›**

139 **Ephesians 1:5** having predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, **read ›**

140 **Ephesians 1:11** in him. In him we were also assigned an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, **read ›**

141 **Philippians 2:13** for it is God who works in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. **read ›**

142 **Philemon 1:14** But I wished to do nothing without your consent, so that your good deed would be voluntary, not compelled. **read ›**

143 **Philemon 1:21** Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even beyond what I say. **read ›**

ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *92 verses, by reference*

Partly machine-linked: related to the passages, not always quoted in them. Each reference links to the verse in our audio Bible.

Genesis 9:18

Exodus 20:8 · 32:34

Deuteronomy 32:10 · 32:23

Psalms 18:26

Proverbs 2:16

Ecclesiastes 1:9

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Isaiah 65:17

Jeremiah 5:8

Matthew 4:10 · 5:26 · 5:28 · 5:39 · 5:40 · 5:41 · 5:44 · 5:45 · 5:46 · 6:24 · 7:12 · 7:24 · 7:26 · 9:16 · 9:17 · 9:29 · 19:17 · 22:37 · 25:34 · 25:41

Mark 12:30

Luke 6:27 · 6:29 · 6:30 · 6:31 · 6:32 · 7:37 · 10:18 · 10:19 · 10:21 · 14:11 · 16:9

John 1:1 · 1:3 · 1:8 · 1:17 · 1:18 · 3:36 · 4:13 · 5:16 · 5:17 · 6:40 · 8:44 · 10:25 · 17:10 · 19:30 · 19:34

Acts 3:17

Romans 2:4 · 4:7 · 6:14 · 7:15 · 8:3 · 8:5 · 10:9 · 13:14

1 Corinthians 5:7 · 6:20 · 12:13 · 12:18 · 13:11 · 14:20

2 Corinthians 4:16

Galatians 3:23 · 3:26 · 3:28 · 4:7

Ephesians 5:8

Philippians 2:10

1 Thessalonians 4:4

1 Timothy 4:1

Hebrews 10:33

1 Peter 2:11 · 2:24 · 3:13 · 4:8

1 John 1:1 · 1:8 · 5:16

Revelation 1:8 · 21:14 · 22:15

Searched: Ante-Nicene Fathers volumes 1–9 and the Bible, including the Septuagint.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

A THF member asked “What did the early Christians believe about free will?” on May 22, 2026. The Historic Faith answered it as a public study on November 9, 2026.

Library only. This study was written only from The Historic Faith’s library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed above, with a link to read it.

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THE END OF THIS STUDY