

Compatibilism



- All who are genuine believers will persevere to the end, and only those who persevere to the end are genuine believers .
- Many passages of Scripture emphasize the necessity of continuing in faith throughout life (Colossians 1:22-23; Hebrews 3:14; 4:14).
- Continuous faith is the means by which God's persevering work is active in Christians (1 Peter 1:5; Philippians 2:12-13)
- The passages that underscore the necessity of continuing in faith in Christ to the end of our lives never have the intention of making those who are presently trusting in Christ worry or doubt that at some future point they might fall away.
 - The passages are a warning for those who are thinking of falling away so they will look over the abyss and be so frightened, that it strengthens them to walk in Christ.

Compatibilism



- Ultimately, assurance of salvation is grounded on God's salvific activity and not some subjective sense (faith, evaluation of good works, personal profession).
- Yet, a subjective sense is not to be minimized but rather directed toward thanksgiving to God: as a believer contemplates the phenomenal transformation which she has undergone she should be drawn to the source of this change (God's marvelous work) and conclude rightly, "I must be elect and saved, for God's loving and gracious work alone can explain this wonder!"

Objections to Compatibilism

- It is inconsistent with human freedom since a guarantee of such a continuous work of God does not allow for human freedom, which includes the of falling away.
 - ANSWER: If freedom is defined as libertarian free will, then yes, perseverance and freedom are incompatible. But this is not the Calvinist Compatibilist position.
 - Our position is soft determinism: God can guarantee our perseverance in salvation without violating our free will.
- It leads to moral laxness and immorality.
 - ANSWER: Focusing on a possible consequence of a doctrine says nothing about the correctness of the doctrine itself. If people pervert the doctrine, it does not hurt the doctrine, but instead it simply shows such people abuse this doctrine.
- It contradicts Scripture, which records several cases of apostasy.
 - ANSWER: We already looked at this. Those are examples of people falling away from the religious position they once held. They had a transitory or spurious faith. It is not the apostasy of true believers.

Objections to Compatibilism

- It contradicts Scripture, which issues warnings against apostasy (this would seem uncalled for, if the believer could not fall away).
 - ANSWER: The purposes of the warnings are to cause us to think soberly.
- It contradicts Scripture, which urges believers by means of exhortation to continue in the way of sanctification (this would appear unnecessary if there were no doubt that they will continue to the end).
 - ANSWER: The doctrine of perseverance includes the means of people's perseverance. These exhortations are some of the means God uses to accomplish His work, preserving us through our faith.

IT WOULD BE EASIER
TO PLUCK A STAR OUT
OF HEAVEN THAN TO
PLUCK A SAINT OUT
OF OUR LORD'S HAND!

A Word about Hermeneutics to Conclude Perseverance

- The Calvinist position goes through the Bible book by book, chapter by chapter, and verse by verse, thus getting every passage in its context.
- Romans 8 is a chapter dedicated to the subject of perseverance. Exegetically it clearly taught it.
- The verses appealed to by Arminians come from different contexts and are literally plucked out and formed into their doctrine.
 - When each verse was looked at in context, they each actually became supportive of the compatibilist position!
- Those who are saved were predestined by God to salvation before time even began.
 - If the Arminian cries that this robs man of freedom, they have a philosophical objection rather than a Biblical one. The Bible speaks clearly of predestination and God being in control of salvation from start to finish.



WHAT HAPPENS TO BABIES WHO DIE?

What About Dead Children?

- Whenever the doctrine of salvation is covered, a question about the eternal destination of dead children is often asked.
- Out of ignorance, most people automatically assume that babies go to heaven.
 - They assume this based off of philosophical arguments about babies being innocent. Yet, we have seen from Scripture that the doctrine of sin demonstrates us to be guilty of Adam's sin, and that we are evil from birth. The doctrine of total depravity teaches us that no one is good.
- So in light of that, how do we answer this question?
- I believe babies go to heaven, but we should not simply assume this out of pious ignorance.
- We need to examine Scripture.



Basic Presuppositions

- Let's get some things straight.
- Babies are guilty of sin just as adults are.
 - Genesis 8:21 teaches that we are wicked from youth.
 - Psalm 51:5 takes it back even further and places us as wicked and sinful in the womb.
 - You could then legitimately conclude (if you took into consideration nothing else) that God would also be just in condemning a baby due to these facts.
- Yet God, for one reason or another, has mercy on young children.
- Some Calvinists, take a more hard-line approach and argue that babies of non-believers are doomed. Only baptized babies of believers would be safe.
 - I think it is safe to say these are a minority of Calvinists, and they wrongly arrive at their conclusions.



Safe, Not Saved

- We need to make a qualification.
- Babies are not saved! The word “saved” implies “salvation.” The Bible teaches that salvation only comes through grace by faith. Babies do not have faith.
 - Saved means election, calling, regeneration, conversion, justification, union, adoption, sanctification, glorification, and perseverance.
- As we saw with the doctrine of perseverance, no truly saved person can lose their salvation.
 - Yet, due to the sin nature, we see billions of children reach a certain age and go on sinning until death with no faith in Christ.
- Thus, they were never saved. We need to be careful with the terminology we use. No baby is “saved.”



Safe, Not Saved

- A more appropriate term is “safe.”
- Babies are “safe” in the Lord for a number of reasons.
 - God does not owe them such, but He gives such grace to them.
- Although God in His word teaches that the baby is wicked from conception, He also reveals to us that the baby is not aware of this.
- In fact, there appears to be an age in which humans become aware of the difference between good and evil. This is called the age of accountability.
 - Two passages establish this beyond doubt.
- Concerning the birth of a special child, Isaiah 7:15-16 says that before he is old enough to reject evil and choose good, a certain sign will come to pass.
 - Isa 7:15-16 By the time he learns to reject what is bad and choose what is good, he will be eating curds and honey.¹⁸ For before the boy knows to reject what is bad and choose what is good, the land of the two kings you dread will be abandoned.

Age of Accountability

- Often, those who disagree will say this passage is not conclusive. Yes it is.
- However, we can turn to the Torah. Paul tells us the whole purpose of the Torah is to teach us about sin and our standing with God.
- Well, in Deuteronomy, God teaches us something interesting concerning this matter.
- Moses reminded the Israelites of the failure of their wanderings.
 - When the spies checked out the land and returned, an unfavorable report caused a rebellion.
 - God punished all of the adults – except Joshua and Caleb – with wandering until death, but spared the children.
- In Deuteronomy 1:39, God reveals again that children do not yet know good and evil.
 - Deu 1:39 Your children, whom you said would be plunder, your sons who don't yet know good from evil, will enter there. I will give them the land, and they will take possession of it.



Age of Accountability

- God did not hold the kids accountable for the rebellion because they were not old enough to know good from evil.
 - So God punished the adults who knew better and then used their kids to conquer Canaan.
- Furthermore, there is a New Testament text that speaks to this paradoxical issue here.
- Romans 5:12 teaches us that we are all sinners because of Adam.
 - It even says that sin existed prior to the law, but it then says that sin is not imputed to your account without the law.



Age of Accountability

- Rom 5:13-14 In fact, sin was in the world before the law, but sin is not charged to a person's account when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression. He is a type of the Coming One.
- Of course, this text is not saying people were not held accountable for sin then until the time of Moses.
 - After all, death reigned from Adam to Moses. For nearly 3,000 years of no law, people still suffered the penalty of sin.
- How can this be if sin is not imputed without the Law?
 - God says through Paul in Romans 2 that people's conscience makes them accountable to the Law.

Age of Accountability

- Rom 2:14-15 So, when Gentiles, who do not by nature have the law, do what the law demands, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the law. ¹⁵ They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts. Their consciences confirm this. Their competing thoughts either accuse or even excuse them
- So, from Adam to Moses there was still death reigning because God's eternal law exists within our consciences.
- How does this relate to small kids?
 - The two passages about knowing good and evil clearly show that small children are not aware of the difference between good and evil, meaning their consciences are not developed yet. This means they are not cognizant of the law.
- If they do not have the law, then their sin is not imputed to their account.

Age of Accountability

- Romans 5:13 does not teach that sin is non-existent without the law.
 - It simply teaches that one is not charged with the sin that does exist until they are under law.
- Therefore, the conscience is what causes one's sin to be imputed to their account, but small kids do not have that conscience yet.
- Therefore, there is an age of accountability. That age is when a child's conscience recognizes good from evil.



Age of Accountability

- Paul adds more support to this when he was speaking of how the law caused death within himself.
 - Rom 7:9-10 Once I was alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life again ¹⁰ and I died. The commandment that was meant for life resulted in death for me.
- When would have Paul been alive apart from the law? In light of what we have seen so far, childhood makes sense. Then when he came to understand good and evil and the law, he died.
- Putting all these passages together, we can say this.
 - All people are born spiritually dead, cursed in the sin nature, and are objects of wrath.
 - However, these legal realities are charged or imputed to your account when you reach a certain age in your youth.
 - Yes, the baby is a sinner with a sin nature and is spiritually dead. However, God does not hold the baby accountable for that death until they are under the law. This is why Paul could say he was alive before the law, but then died when he came into contact with the law.

Biblical Examples of AoA

- We have seen enough to demonstrate why babies are not "saved," but are in fact "safe."
- Additionally, there are passages in the Bible that cannot be ignored.
- David in 2 Samuel 12 fasted so that this sick baby would not die, but when the child died, David stopped fasting and carried on as normal. When questioned about it, he gave the following answer:
 - 2Sa 12:22-23 He answered, "While the baby was alive, I fasted and wept because I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let him live.'²³ But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I'll go to him, but he will never return to me."
- David had the full expectation of seeing his child in heaven.
 - David in Psalm 23:6 apparently expected he would go to heaven. So if he said here that he expects to go to where his kid is, and yet he expects to go to heaven, then we can assume David's child is in heaven.



Biblical Examples of AoA

- Another interesting passage is found in 1 Kings 14:7-13.
- Jeroboam, the wicked king of Israel caused the northern kingdom to sink into apostasy.
 - So as God promised punishment, he promised great suffering for Jeroboam and all of his kids.
 - Yet, the king had an ill child who God said He would cause to die and be mourned so that he would not undergo such sufferings.
- God's stated reason for doing this to the child is that there was something in the child pleasing to God.
- Keep in mind, this was a child to non-believing parents.



Biblical Examples of AoA

- 1Ki 14:10-13 Because of all this, I am about to bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam: I will wipe out all of Jeroboam's males, both slave and free, in Israel; I will sweep away the house of Jeroboam as one sweeps away dung until it is all gone!¹¹ Anyone who belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city, the dogs will eat, and anyone who dies in the field, the birds will eat, for the LORD has spoken!¹² "As for you, get up and go to your house. When your feet enter the city, the boy will die."¹³ All Israel will mourn for him and bury him. He alone out of Jeroboam's house will be given proper burial because out of the house of Jeroboam something favorable to the LORD God of Israel was found in him.



Biblical Examples of AoA

- Finally, Jesus Christ made statements that were very favorable to children in Matthew 19.
 - Mat 19:13-14 Then children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them.¹⁴ Jesus said, "Leave the children alone, and don't try to keep them from coming to me, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."
- If the kingdom of heaven is more for people like those children, then we can conclude that these children did not have their due sin imputed to their account.
- Every saved believer is in the same condition.
- Through Christ's grace, our sin is not imputed to us either. Grace is grace, and it is unmerited whether given to babies or adults.

