



Neighborly Apologetics



5. Free Will and Sovereignty



Neighborly Apologetics

The Royal Law
Love your neighbor

God has entrusted the primary work
of the Kingdom to the common
Christian family

with a priestly role in our neighborhoods

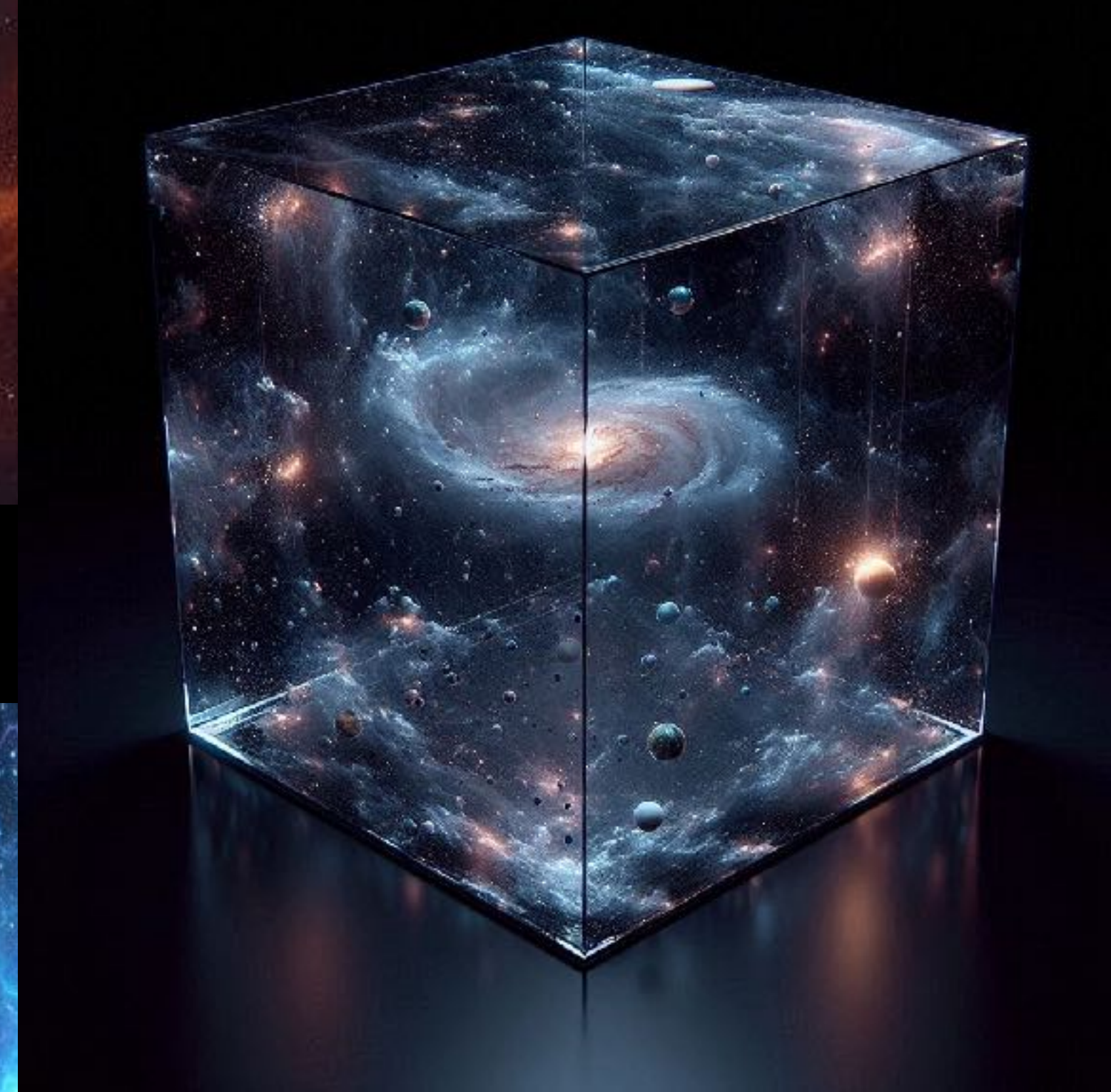
today →

Neighboring Apologetic
Categories:

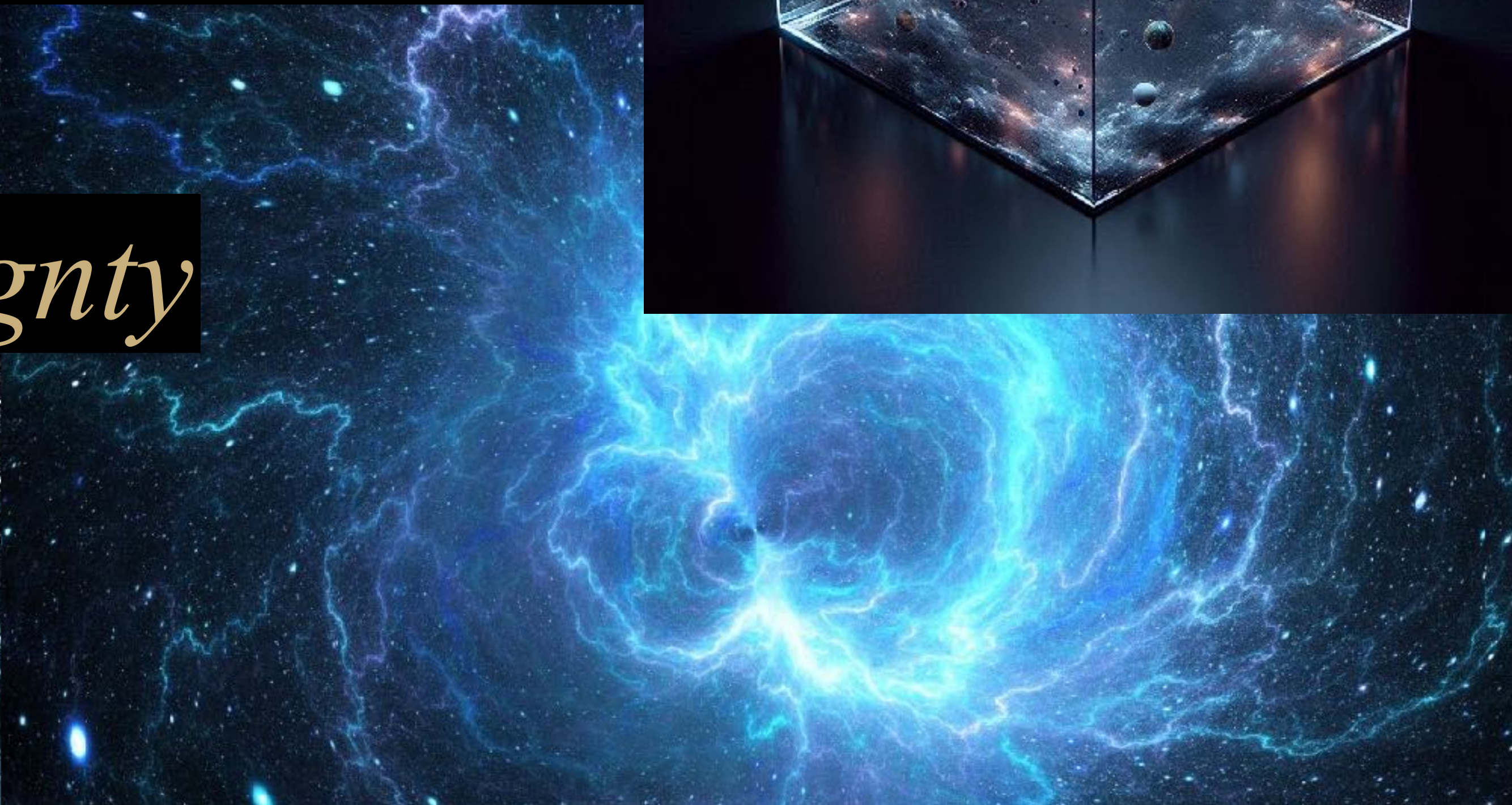
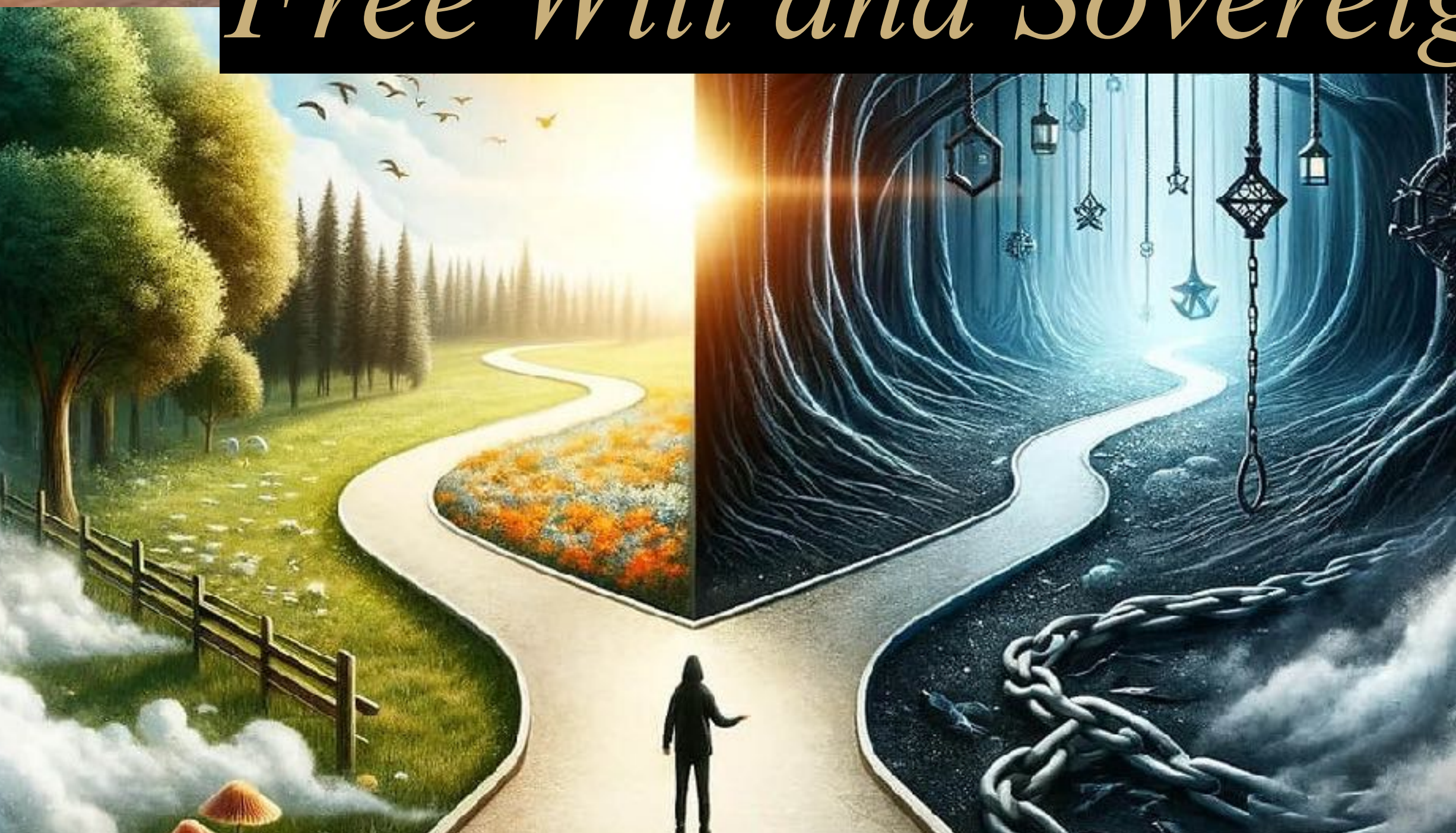
- 1. Evil and Suffering*
- 2. Absolute Truth and Relativism*
- 3. “Only One Way” and Religious Pluralism*
- 4. Faith and Reason*
- 5. Free Will and Sovereignty*
- 6. God’s Existence and Nature*
- 7. Goodness of Man, Judgment and Hell*
- 8. Hypocrisy and Christian Crimes of the Past*
- 9. The Claims of Jesus and the Resurrection*
- 10. Miracles*
- 11. Science and Evolution*
- 12. The Veracity of the Bible and “Contradictions”*
- Plus: Burning Issues of our Day*



Neighborly Apologetics



Free Will and Sovereignty





Free Will and Sovereignty



Free Will and Sovereignty

topics

naturalism

determinism

fatalism

sovereignty

predestination

foreknowledge

God's perfect will

God's permissive will

free will

progressive theology

Free Will and Sovereignty
questions

Are God's sovereignty and
man's free will contradictory?

Does man have a
free will?

Is God truly and
absolutely sovereign?

Why are so many
Christians divided over
these things?

Does God's sovereignty
destroy the free will of
man?

*your neighbor might have questions like this...
or your children... or you*

Free Will and Sovereignty

five views

Naturalism/Evolutionary Biology

Fatalism

Process Theology

Arminian Theology

Reformed Theology

Naturalism/Evolutionary Biology



Naturalism believes there is nothing
but matter and energy

Dr. Will Provine
Cornell University



“you have to suspend
your rational mind”

“fairy tales”

No gods or purposive forces

No ultimate foundation for ethics

No free will

Dr. Will Provine
Cornell University

Premise: Naturalism & Materialism are rational
Supernaturalism and Christianity are irrational

Free Will and Sovereignty

No free will

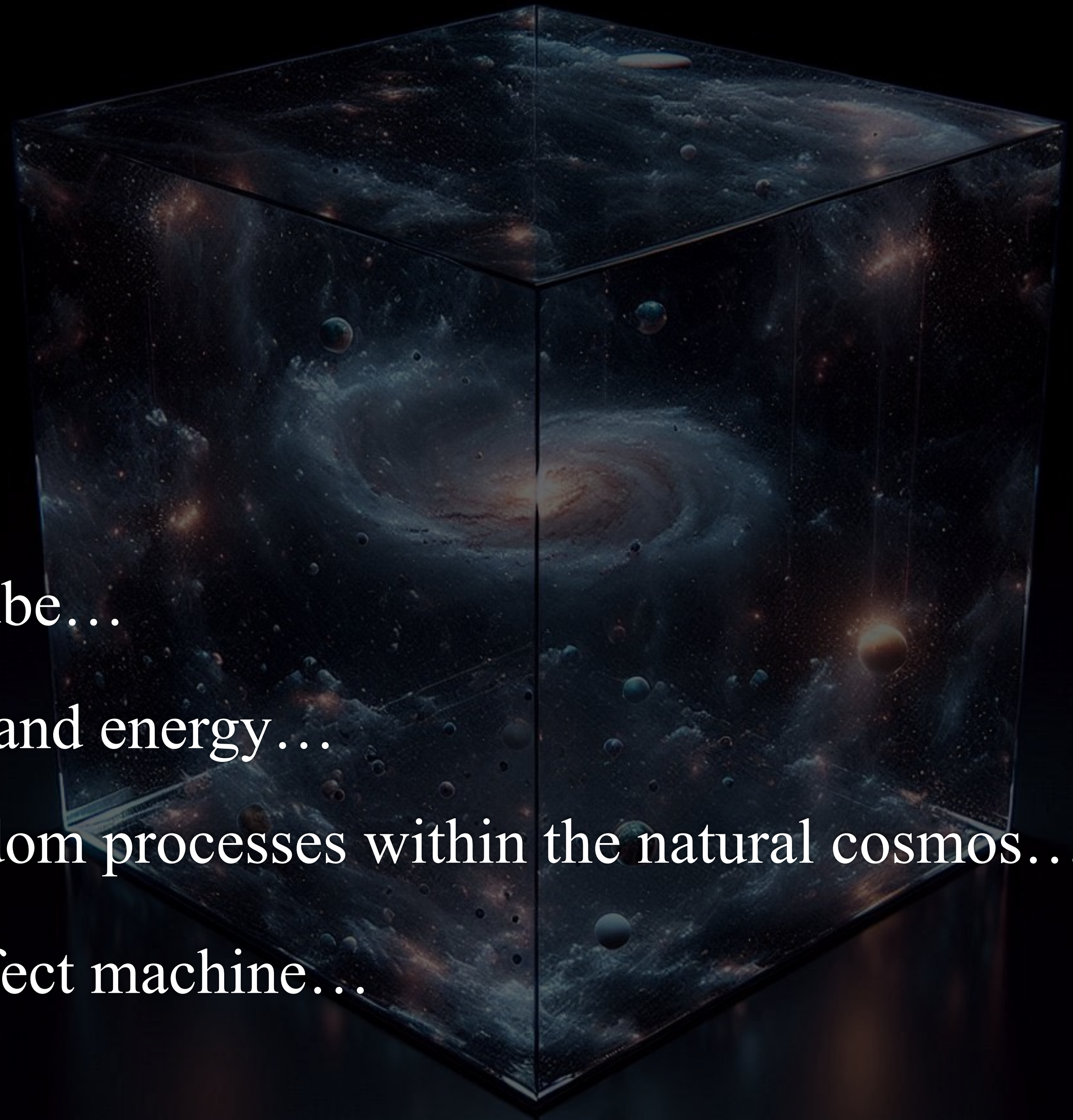
Since nothing exists except the cosmic cube...

and everything consists of simply matter and energy...

then man is a material product of the random processes within the natural cosmos...

and therefore he is merely a cause and effect machine...

without a free will



Free Will and Sovereignty



No free will

Student: Dr. Provine, excuse me, but I just have to ask this question...

Dr. Provine: Well of course you have to ask your question.

Student: Did you have to say that that man has no free will?

Dr. Provine: Well of course I did because man does not have a free will.

Student: So, you are not freely saying that. You are saying that simply because matter and energy have determined you will say that and if I say that man has a free will, then matter and energy have determined that as well. Aren't we left with just staring at each other? Waiting for the next determined response? What then is the purpose of any conversation at all? Aren't we just spouting off our own predetermined responses?

Free Will and Sovereignty

five views

Naturalism/Evolutionary Biology

Fatalism

Process Theology

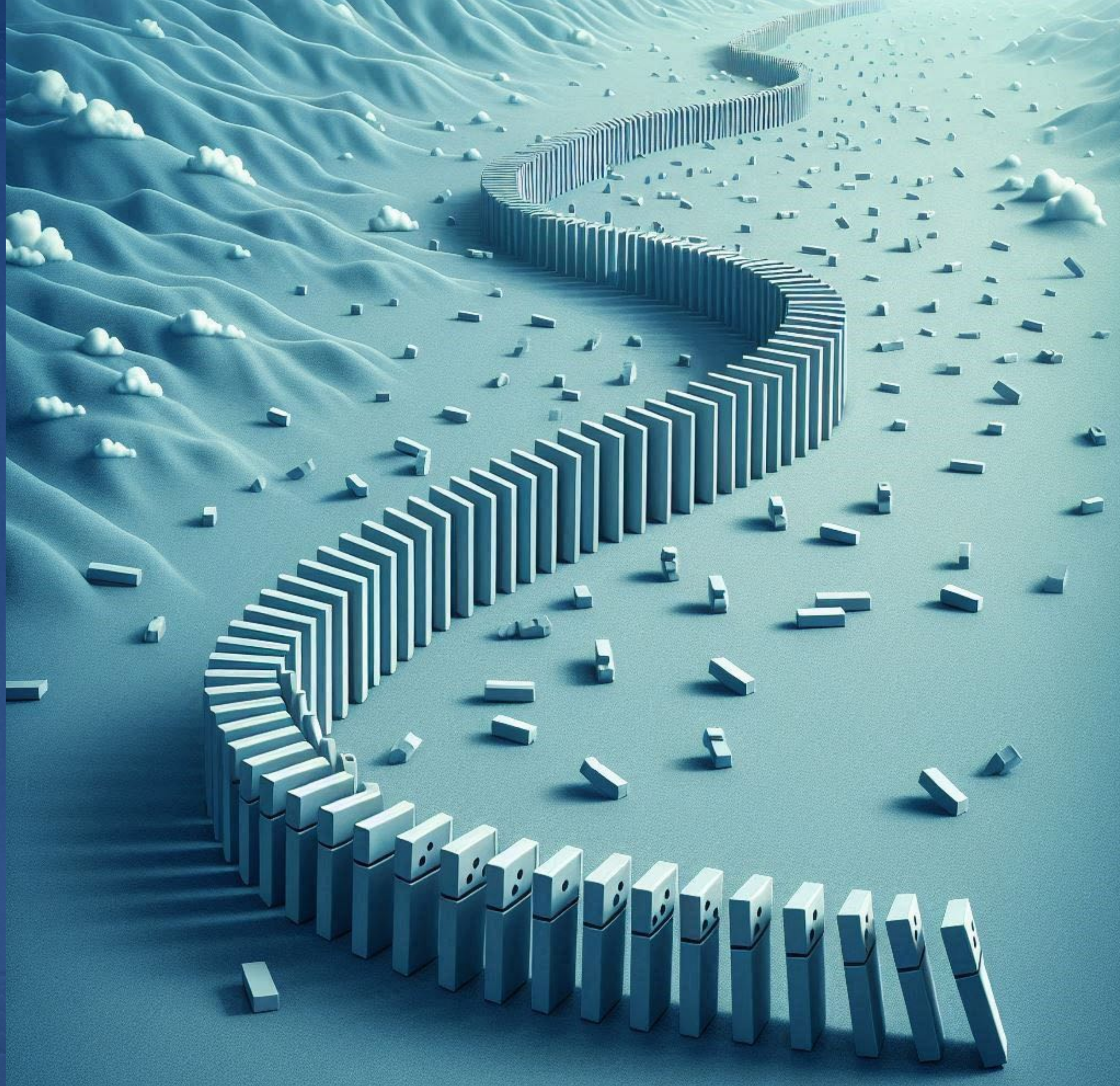
Arminian Theology

Reformed Theology

Fatalism

Fatalism is a belief that one is caught in a destiny that is inescapable.

The source of this destiny is often attributed to a higher power or simply the unknown “fate”.



Determinism

vs

Fatalism

Free Will and Sovereignty

five views

Naturalism/Evolutionary Biology

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Process Theology

Arminian Theology

Reformed Theology

Process Theology

Based upon the belief that the only absolute is change.

Therefore, God must also change. He is in “process” with us. He is like the grand chess master, He has no idea what move you are going to make, but He plays a great game.



Process Theology *and* The Sovereignty of God

Jesus Christ is the **same** yesterday
and today and forever.

Hebrews 13:8

Process Theology *and* The Sovereignty of God

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who **does not change** like shifting shadows.

James 1:17

Process Theology *and* The Sovereignty of God

But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever,
the purposes of his heart through all
generations.

Psalm 33:11

Process Theology *and* The Sovereignty of God

Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God,
and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.
I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient
times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand,
and I will do all that I please.'

Isaiah 46:9-10

Free Will and Sovereignty

five views

Naturalism/Evolutionary Biology

Fatalism

Process Theology

Arminian Theology

Reformed Theology

Arminian Theology

Reformed Theology

Both of these views claim to hold a strong belief in the Bible. They both claim Jesus as Lord and Savior. They both hold that God is sovereign.

So what is the difference?

Arminian Theology

Reformed Theology

So what is the difference?

What role does man have in his salvation and how far does God's Sovereignty extend into that work of salvation?

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What role does man have in his salvation and how far does God's Sovereignty extend into that work of salvation?

Arminian Theology

The Sovereignty of God does not have absolute control over every decision, but works within the free will of man to achieve God's plans and purposes. Man has the free will to choose or not to choose salvation.

Reformed Theology

The Sovereignty of God has absolute control over every decision. Man's will has fallen to such a degree that it requires a work of God to bring him salvation. Man is saved by grace alone.

Neighborly Apologetics

the role of the fruit of the Spirit in our engagement
with our neighbor

Getting Back to the First Things

Our focus should always be first on God and His nature

Is God Sovereign?

What does this mean?

the debate is often over the definition

God's Sovereignty

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.

Ephesians 1:11

God's Sovereignty

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.

Matthew 10:29-30

God's Sovereignty

Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.

1 Chronicles 29:11

God's Sovereignty

You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.

Nehemiah 9:6

God's Sovereignty

So that they will know that You alone, whose
name is the Lord,
Are the Most High over all the earth.

Psalm 83:18

God's Sovereignty

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God's Sovereignty

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Colossians 1:16-17

God's Sovereignty

I form light and create darkness; I make well-being and create calamity;

I am the Lord, who does all these things.

“Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness;
let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit;
let the earth cause them both to sprout; I the Lord have created it.

“Woe to him who strives with him who formed him, a pot among earthen pots!
Does the clay say to him who forms it, ‘What are you making?’
or ‘Your work has no handles’?

Isaiah 45:7-9

God's Sovereignty

The lot is cast into the lap,
but its every decision is from the Lord.

Proverbs 16:33

God's Sovereignty

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

Act 13:48

God's Sovereignty

even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

Ephesians 1:4-6

God's Sovereignty

Our God is in the heavens;
he does all that he pleases.

Psalm 115:3

God's Sovereignty

Ah, Lord God! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.

Jeremiah 32:17

God's Sovereignty

Many are the plans in the mind of a man,
but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.

Proverbs 19:21

Many Christians salute the sovereignty of God
but believe in the sovereignty of man.

R. C. Sproul (1939-2017)



Many Christians salute the sovereignty of God
but believe in the sovereignty of man.

To say that God's sovereignty is limited by
man's freedom is to make man sovereign.

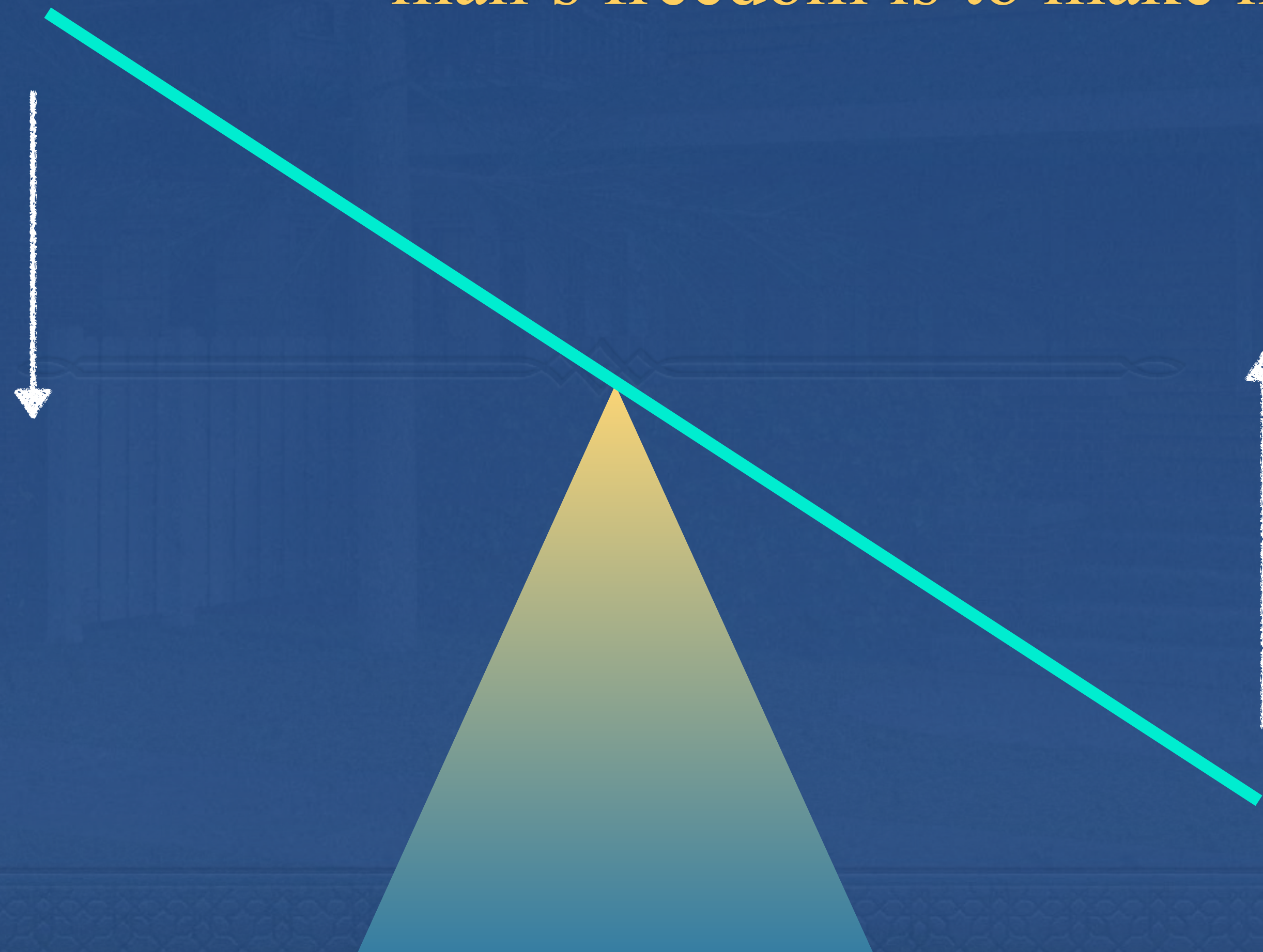
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Sovereignty
of God



sovereignty
of man

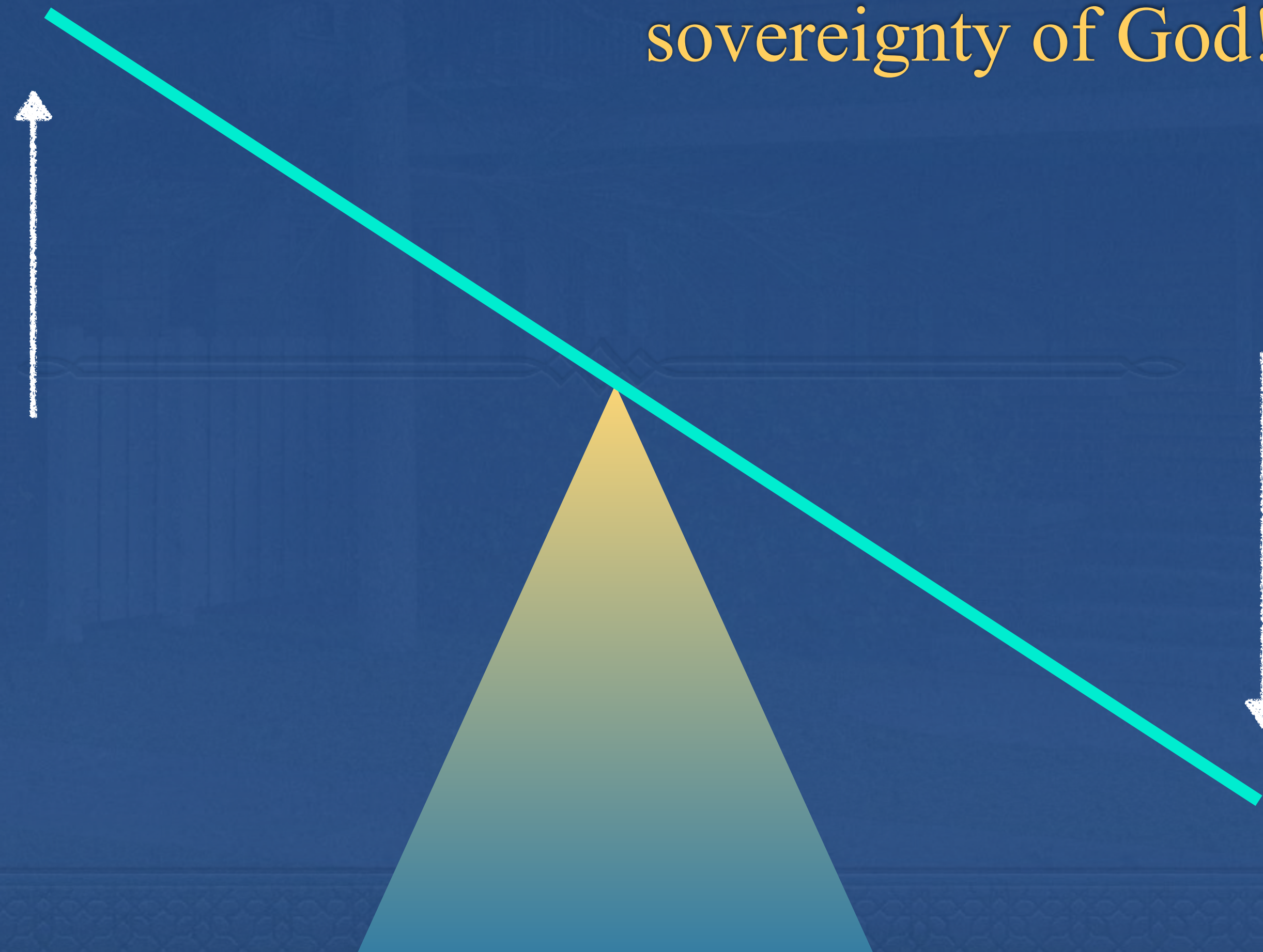
No doctrine in the whole Word of God
has more excited the hatred of
mankind, than the truth of the absolute
sovereignty of God!

C. H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)



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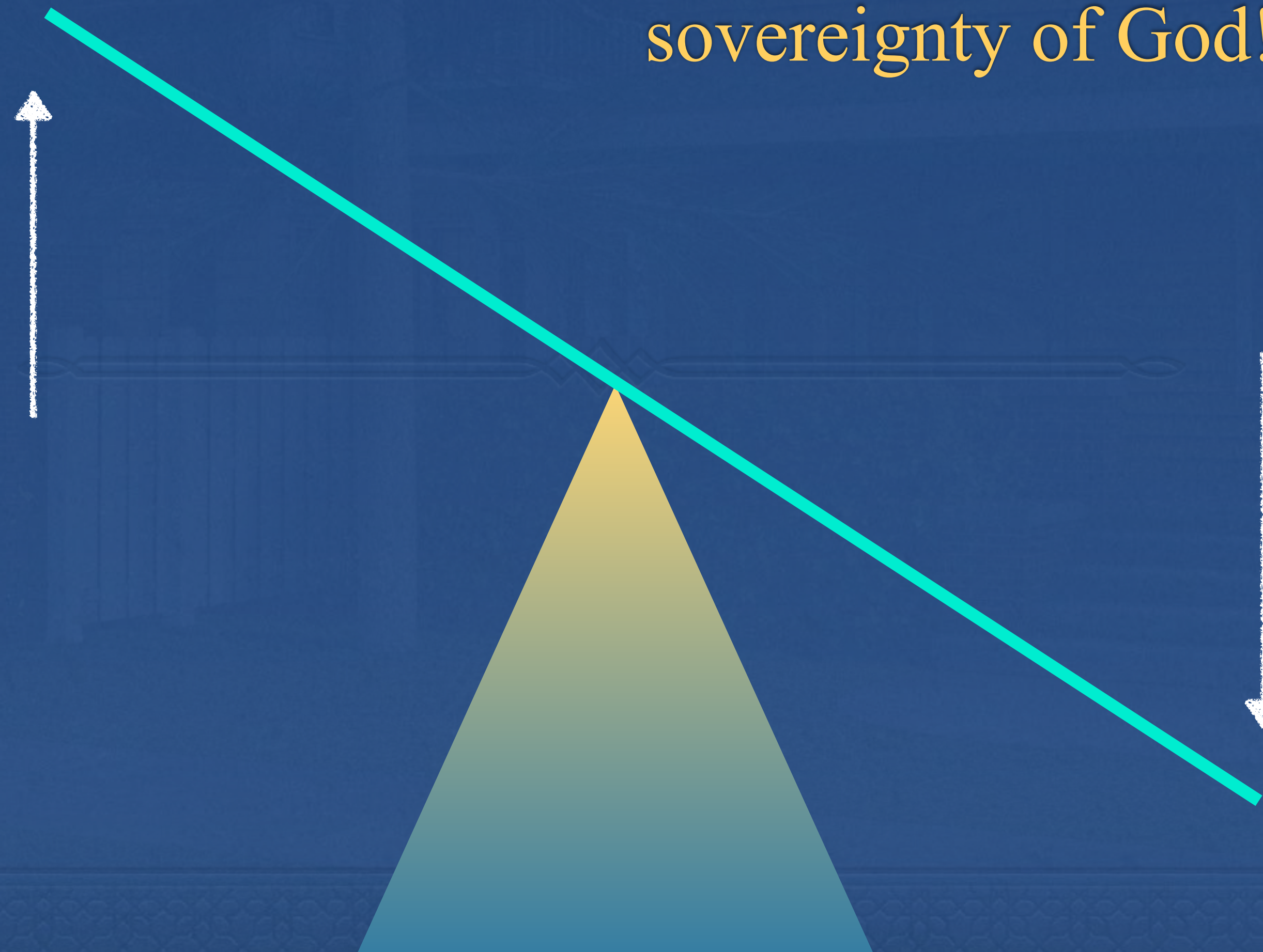
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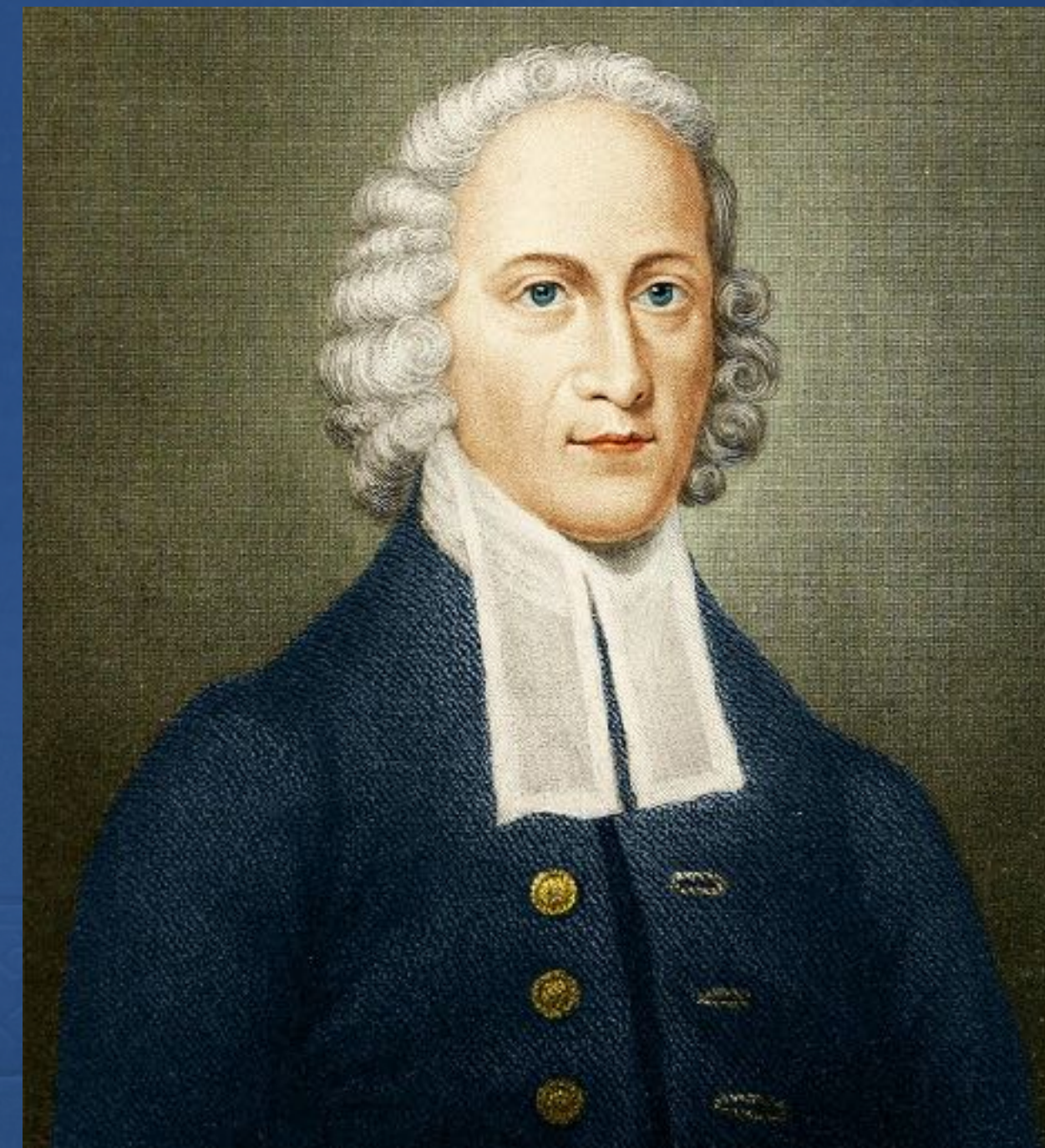
Sovereignty
of God



sovereignty
and the
seemingly
significance
of man

Absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God. God's sovereignty has ever appeared to me a great part of His glory. It has often been my delight to approach God, and adore Him as a sovereign God.

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)



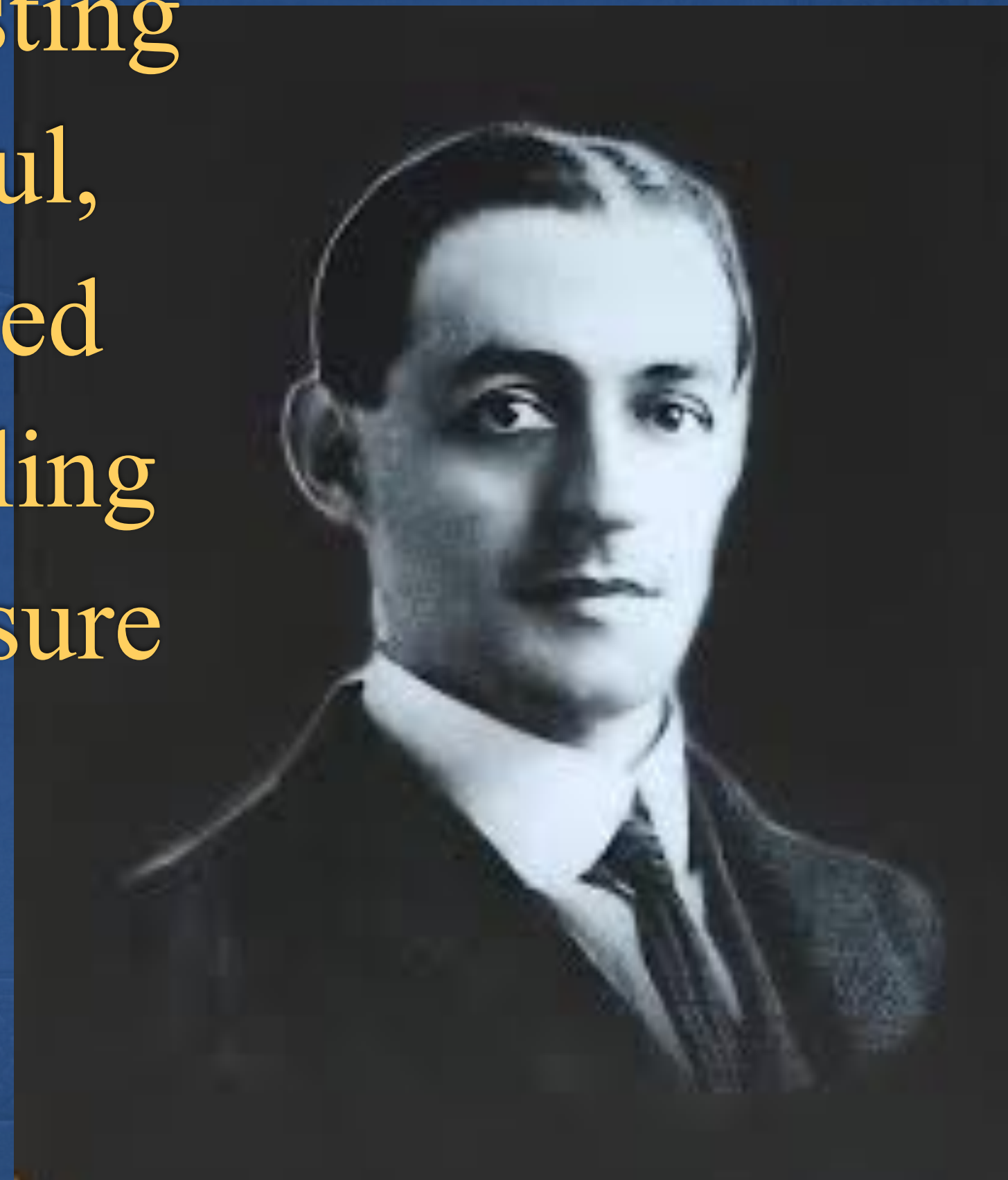
There is not one piece of cosmic dust that is
outside the scope of God's sovereign
providence.

R. C. Sproul



No revolving world, no shining of star, no storm, no creature moves, no actions of men, no errands of angels, no deeds of devil—nothing in all the vast universe can come to pass otherwise than God has eternally purposed. Here is a foundation of faith. Here is a resting place for the intellect. Here is an anchor for the soul, both sure and steadfast. It is not blind fate, unbridled evil, man or devil, but the Lord Almighty who is ruling the world, ruling it according to His own good pleasure and for His own eternal glory.”

A. W. Pink (1886-1952)



Salvation is the work of God. It is He alone who quickens the soul “dead in trespasses and sins,” and it is He also who maintains the soul in its spiritual life.

C. H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)



Free Will and Sovereignty

Does man appear to have a free will?

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets
and stones those who are sent to it! How often would

I have gathered your children together as a hen
gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not
willing!

Matthew 23:37

Free Will and Sovereignty

Does man appear to have a free will?

They built the high places of Baal in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to offer up their sons and daughters to Molech, though I did not command them, nor did it enter into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

Jeremiah 32:35

Free Will and Sovereignty

Does man appear to have a free will?

What does this even mean?

Free will means that God has given man the ability to make choices. However, his choices are limited. He cannot choose to fly like an eagle, nor swim like a shark, breathing through gills. He has free will to choose, but only within the bounds of his nature.

Free Will and Sovereignty

Are these two things contradictory?

If God is Sovereign is it therefore
impossible for man to have a free will?

If man operates with a free will is it therefore
impossible for God to be truly Sovereign?

Free Will and Sovereignty

the Law of Non-Contradiction

“contradictory propositions cannot both be true in the same sense at the same time”

does this therefore mean that “free will” and “sovereignty of God” can’t both be true?

this is the common solution: throw one out

Free Will and Sovereignty

the Law of Non-Contradiction

if they are both the left
bottom corner piece,
then we have a problem;
but if not, they can be
part of the same puzzle
picture



Free Will and Sovereignty

does God present them both as true?



Free Will and Sovereignty

What does God's Word tell us about His Sovereignty and man's free will?

Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a Man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—

*this Man, delivered over by the **predetermined plan** and **foreknowledge** of God, **you nailed** to a cross by the **hands of godless men** and **put Him to death**.*

Acts 2:22-23

Free Will and Sovereignty

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*this Man, delivered over by the **predetermined plan** and **foreknowledge** of God, **you nailed** to a cross by the **hands of godless men** and **put Him to death**.*

Acts 2:22-23

God “predetermined” all of this;
yet He holds them accountable
for their actions

Free Will and Sovereignty

What does God's Word tell us about His Sovereignty and man's free will?

*...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;
for it is God who is at work in you, both to desire and to
work for His good pleasure.*

Philippians 2:12-13

man is to “*work out*”; yet God is
the One *working it out* in them

What can we conclude from this?

Free Will and Sovereignty

What can we conclude from this?

God is sovereign, with predetermined plans

For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

Romans 9:15-16

Man is accountable for his actions

Free Will and Sovereignty

What can we conclude from this?

Is this a contradiction—or merely a mystery?

Are there things about God that are so deep and so far beyond our finite ability to understand, that we sometimes come to a place where we are left with a Divine mystery where wisdom calls us to rest in the wonder of what we have been allowed to see?

Before the mountains were born or you brought forth
the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting
you are God. Psalm 90:2

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,
the beginning and the end”

-Revelation 21:6



final thoughts on “free will”



why is there such a heated and
determined fight for free will?

Personally, I don't want my
free will

let's talk about the will and the heart

For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery,
sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

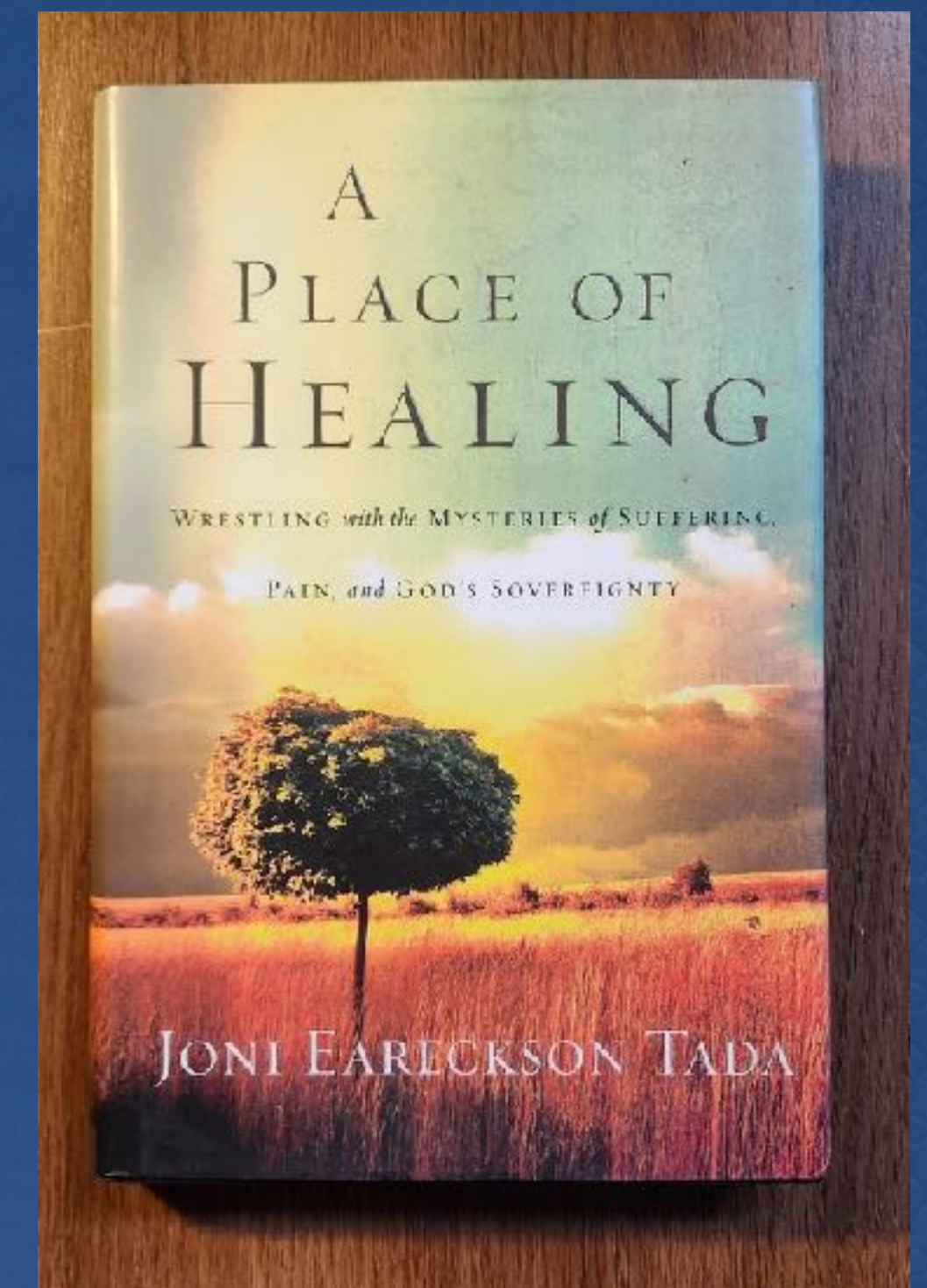
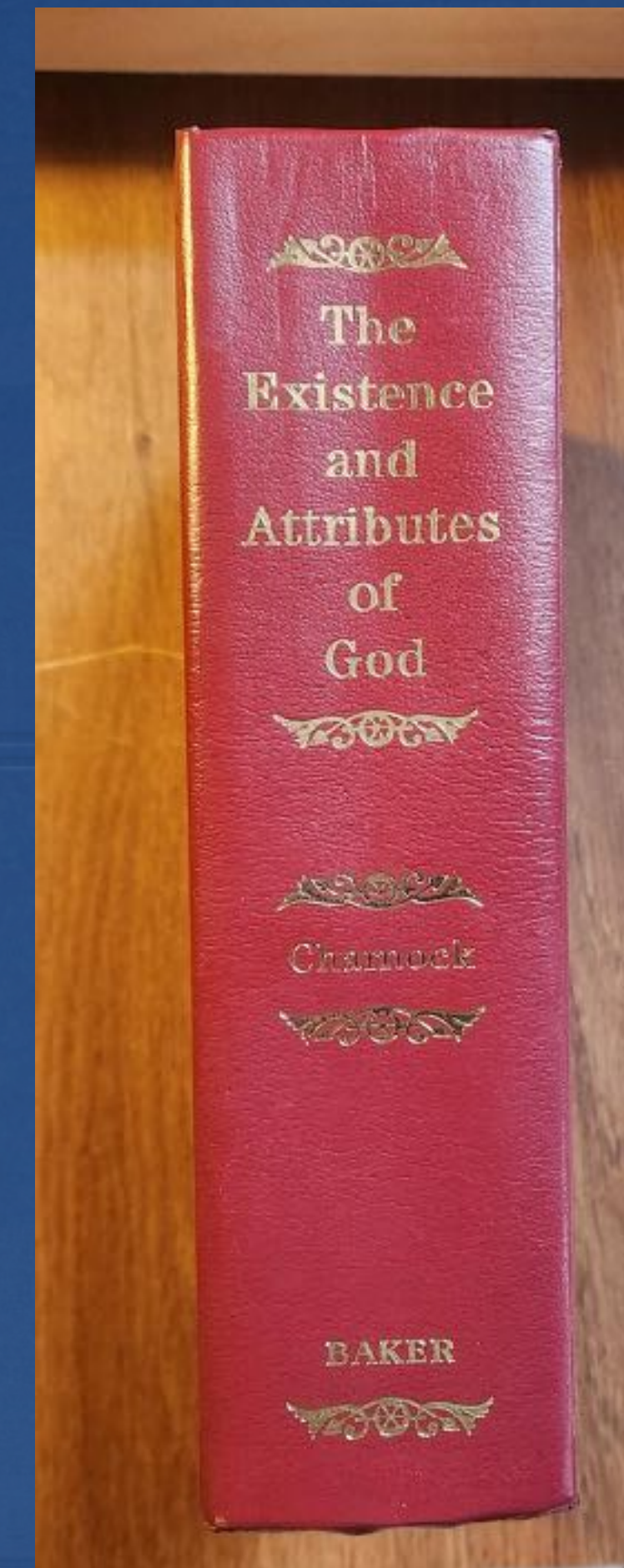
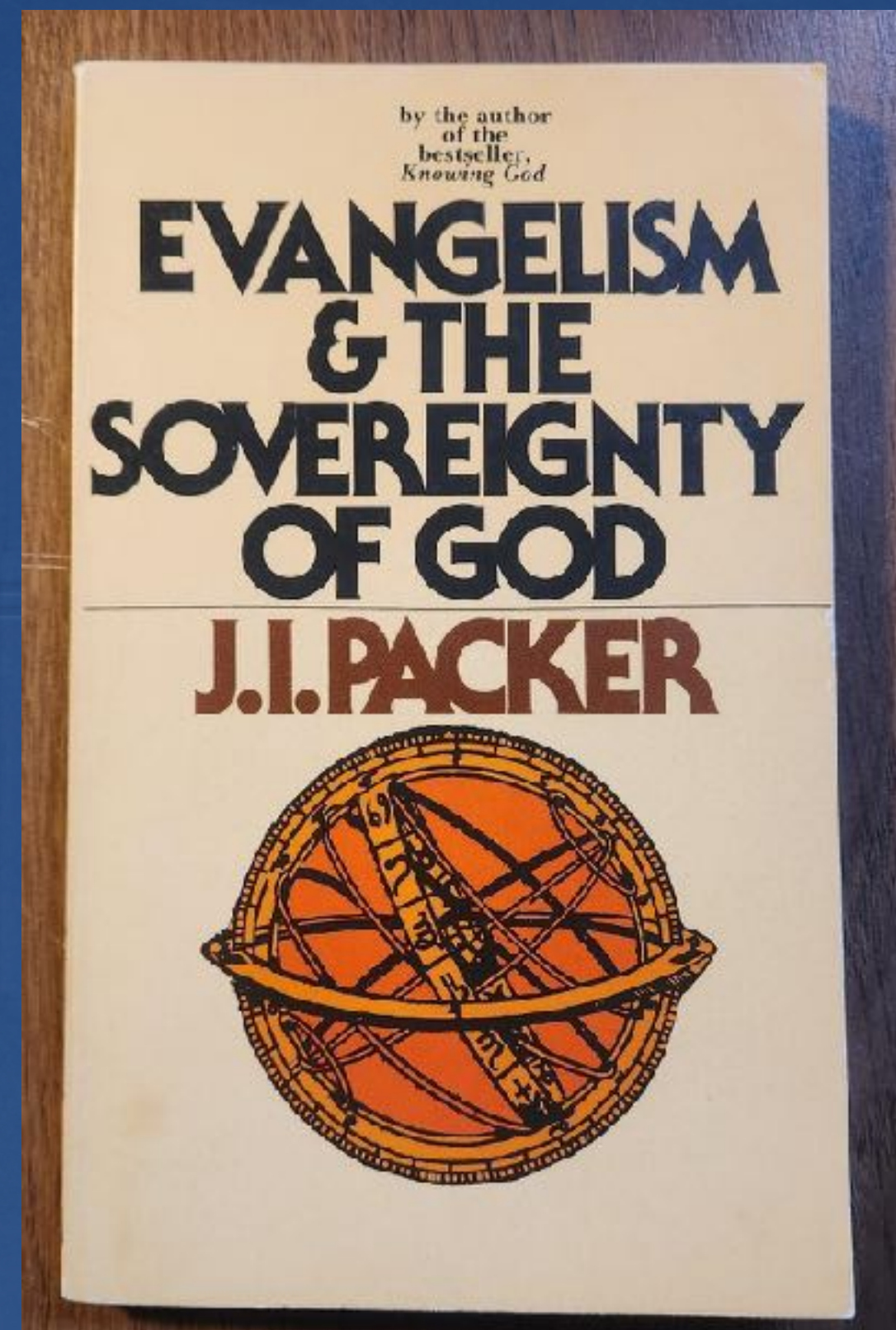
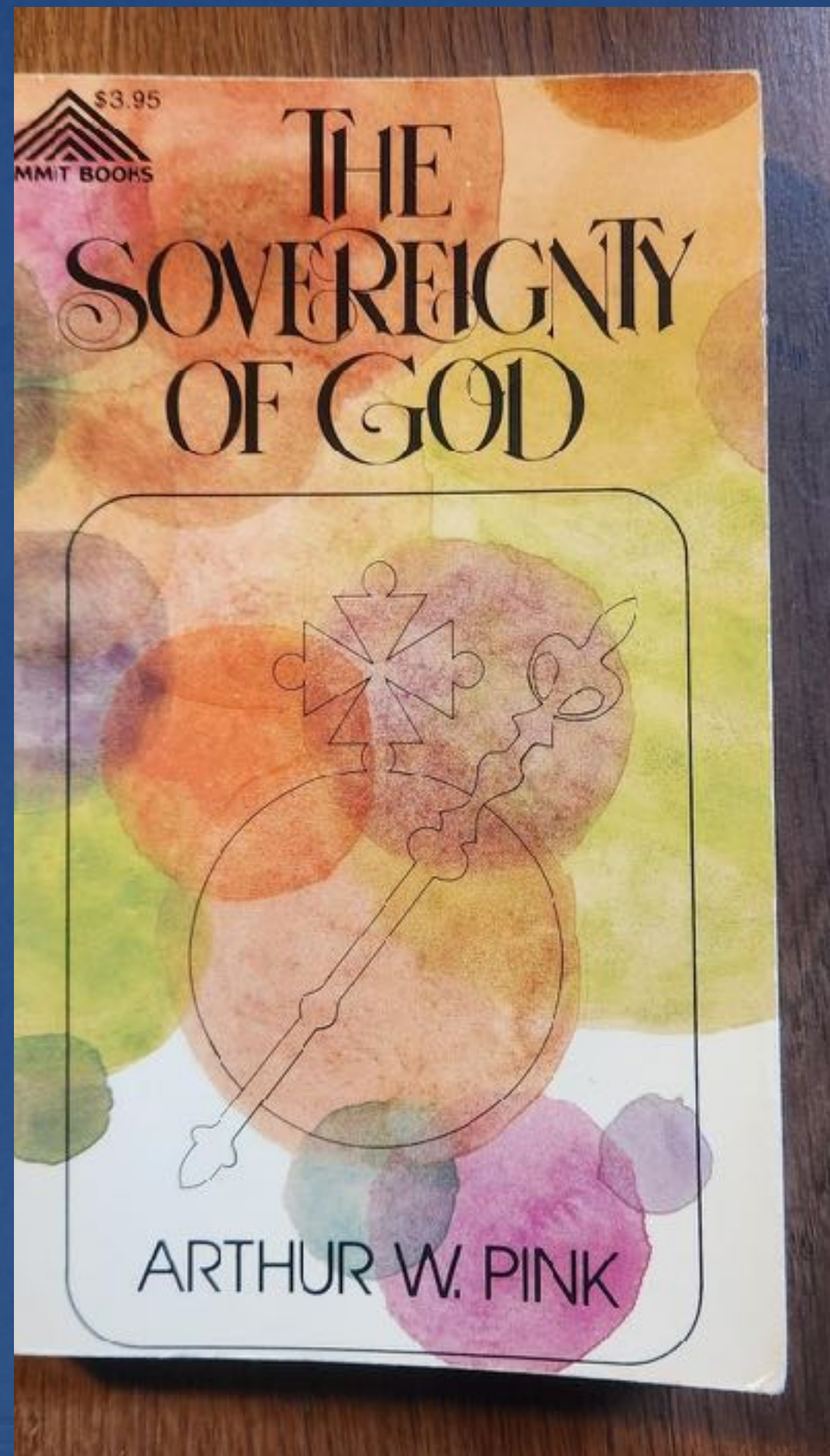
Matthew 15:19

does the will drive the heart, or
the heart drive the will?

if the heart drives the will, then the will
isn't free, but simply driven by the heart

Neighborly Apologetics

5. Free Will and Sovereignty



Neighboring Apologetic Categories:

next



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- 2. Absolute Truth and Relativism*
- 3. “Only One Way” and Religious Pluralism*
- 4. Faith and Reason*
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