

If the "all men" of verse 18 is pressed beyond its context in verses 17 and 19, then it could be understood to mean that through Christ's one act of righteousness all men are declared righteous (universalism). The only way to avoid universal salvation (which is denied elsewhere in Scripture) would then be to understand verse 18 to be speaking of the universal potential for justification that results from Christ's atonement. But this would not fit with the context, which speaks of actual justification, through receiving God's abundant provision of grace and the gift of righteousness (verse 17).

h. Revelation 22:17

"And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come'. And let the one who hears say, 'Come'. And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."

In this passage (as in all other invitation passages) it is asserted by opponents of the Reformed view of predestination that an invitation implies that the hearer is able to respond, and that therefore sinners must have full ability (either native or restored) to make a favorable response to the gospel.

The Reformed view holds that in one sense, sinners do have the ability to respond favorably, and in another sense do not have the ability to respond favorably. On the one hand, sinners have all the faculties and capabilities necessary to respond favorably to the gospel; on the other hand, they do not have the inclination or disposition to do so. They don't want to turn from their own way and go God's way. They cherish the freedom to choose their own life style too much to let someone else (even God) decide how they shall live. Their disinclination to respond to God's invitation arises totally from themselves, not from God. All who wish to come to God in God's way may do so!

i. John 6:37b

"and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."

This is an assurance that all who come to Christ will be received by Him. It implies nothing about the natural man's ability to come to Christ by a sheer act of will whenever he chooses.

In addition, verse 37a should be included as context for this assurance. Jesus said, "All that the Father gives me will come to me." This tells us two things: (1) that there is a class of persons whom the Father gives to the Son; and (2) that this class of persons will actually come to the Son (presumably for salvation). Then verse 37b adds a third idea, namely (3) that no one in this class of persons whom the Father gives to the Son and who actually come to the Son will be cast out (presumably from the realm of salvation).

Thus, instead of emphasizing man's ability to come to Christ, the verse actually emphasizes God's grace in casting out no one that He brings to the Son.

j. John 12:32

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."

The context (verses 31-33) should be noted. There we read of the world being judged and Satan being driven out; and we learn that Christ is going to die by hanging or crucifixion (He will be "lifted up from the earth"). And we learn that if He is lifted up, he "will draw all men to Himself."