



REFUTING LANE-CRAIG:

WHY MOLINISM FAILS UNDER ITS OWN LOGIC



Refuting William Lane Craig:

Why Molinism Runs Into the Very Conclusion It Was Invented to Avoid

I. The Problem Molinism Cannot Solve Despite How Hard It Tries

Molinism was invented to avoid one conclusion: that God knowingly created billions who would suffer eternal torment. It fails.

Despite its elaborate philosophical framework, Molinism cannot escape the very outcome it abhors. Its own premises - middle knowledge, counterfactuals, and the “best feasible world” – **still require** the doctrine of reprobation it was designed to deny.

Here is *why*.

✚ **God *still* chose to create *this* world *knowing* that billions would suffer not merely some earthly loss or missed opportunity, but eternal conscious torment. They would not exist had He not brought them into existence. We are still at square one.**

No appeal to philosophical complexity alters that fact.

Molinism claims that this world and everyone who has ever or will ever live on it represents the *best possible outcome*; in which God achieves His purpose with the best possible result - the *maximum number of the saved* while preserving libertarian freedom. But that claim does not resolve the moral difficulty; it only sharpens it. For a *much* deeper, more *urgent* question immediately arises: ***who set this so-called “maximum”?***

Nothing and no one outside of God determined that number. *If God had chosen to create fewer people in total, fewer would have perished eternally.* In plain terms, if God knew that under the best feasible conditions one billion people would freely believe out of six billion created, then He knowingly brought the remaining five billion into existence as the necessary population from which that one billion would be drawn. Their existence was not incidental; it was instrumental to achieve *that* end.

There is no coherent way to escape this conclusion. If the salvation of the one billion was the goal - the end for which this world was created - and if God knew that

achieving that goal *required* the creation of six billion people in total – allowing for counterfactuals and freedom for each person, then the remaining five billion function as unavoidable “collateral damage” within that system. No semantic distinction between “desire,” “permission,” or “intention” can change the moral reality: **God knowingly created persons whose eternal ruin was foreseen *and required* to achieve the outcome Molinism celebrates – the so-called “maximum number saved.”**

This is *why* Molinism ultimately fails at the very point it most wants to succeed. It seeks to protect God from responsibility for eternal loss, yet its own logic requires God to bring vast numbers into existence precisely because they are necessary as the larger pool from which to yield this so-called “best” result. *The loss of the vast number is not merely foreknown, it becomes structurally necessary.*

✚ **Molinism does not avoid the conclusion it abhors; *it institutionalizes it.***

Matthew 11:21-26 – The Death of Molinism

This problem does not merely exist in the philosophical or speculative realm in which Molinism thrives. Scripture addresses it directly - and with stunning clarity.

Jesus declares that the people of Sodom, Tyre, and Sidon *would have repented* had they been given the same grace granted to Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum (Matt. 11:21–24). That statement alone shatters the Molinist claim that God *always* actualizes the best possible conditions for the most people to be saved.

✚ **More striking still, Jesus does not lament this reality. He *praises* the Father for it:**

“Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I praise You that have hidden *these things* from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to babes. Yes, Father, for this was Your *good pleasure.*” (Matt. 11:26)

Here, in context, Christ openly affirms that God ***knowingly withholds the very means He knows would have resulted in repentance.*** Not because He lacks power to actually save, not because He lacks knowledge, but because it accords with His sovereign will to “show mercy to whom He will” (Rom. 9:14-18). The text does not allow retreat into hypothetical worlds per Molinism or libertarian evasions per Open Theism and synergism.

✚ What finite, flawed, sinners object would make God a moral “monster” for doing – the perfect, spotless, Incarnate Word and eternal Son worshipped Him for!

This profound fact and the scriptural basis for it from the lips of the Lord Himself, are so significant in their depth and implication that it destroys Molinism at its very core. Matthew 11 is therefore, for this reason, the absolute breaking point of Molinism – and indeed, all synergistic systems as well. For they all abhor and openly condemn as a moral “monster” a God who would do what Jesus here affirmed God *did* and *does*. What sinners will insist would make God reprehensible and unworthy of praise, His perfect Son praised Him for doing precisely that.

Some Molinists object that God need not aim at the “maximum number saved,” replacing that language with vaguer claims about achieving an “*optimal balance of goods*.” Yet this move does not escape the dilemma, for whatever complex good is proposed, **God still knowingly withholds conditions He knows would have resulted in repentance** (Matt. 11:21–26), thereby determining who will and will not be saved at the level of “real” world-actualization. The question therefore does not vanish - it is merely restated: *why did God choose this world rather than one in which more would repent under the very conditions Christ affirms would have brought them to faith?*

III. Eternal Conscious Torment and the Moral Priority Revealed

When God knowingly allows, ordains or risks **eternal conscious torment** that He has the power to prevent, for the sake of preserving some *other* good - such as libertarian freedom - that other good is thereby revealed as having in truth, *higher* priority in His mind and purpose. The principle is clear: what *one is willing to risk and or, sacrifice to preserve or obtain, discloses what one values most*.


What parent who loves their child would stand by, watching their child run into oncoming traffic, get hit by a truck and be killed, and justify it saying “I needed to respect their autonomy. I told him repeatedly not to run onto the busy street, but he freely chose to disobey me and do so. There is no culpability on my part for his death – even though I saw the truck coming and knew he would be killed as a result.” **Yet this is in its very essence the view of all synergists concerning salvation.** What they would recoil in horror at, and call morally obscene in a human parent, and agree that parent was recklessly irresponsible and should be held accountable – they deny in their theology and assert that God does precisely the same thing! **Only in salvation it**

is not merely loss of temporary, physical life at stake but *eternal* conscious torment that is!

The objection that the analogy suggests a young child, and it therefore not a suitable comparison for adults is invalid *because* Jesus addressed His disciples – all of whom were adult men – as “*little children*” (Jn 13:33) and in his 1st epistle, John repeatedly addressed his readers – the majority of whom would be adults – as “*little children*” or “*children*” (1 John 2:, 12-13, 3:7, 18, 4:4). The analogy is therefore appropriate. And the *only* reason why they would object to it is because it acts as a mirror reflecting back to them the utter absurdity of their view of salvation.

This conclusion that Molinism seeks to avoid cannot be escaped by elaborate word games, appeals to speculative theories or fancy sounding philosophical jargon. Whether one speaks of “*permission*,” “*allowance*,” or “*non-intention*,” the reality remains unchanged. Molinism says God *could* save these people but chooses not to, *because* doing so would interfere with the freedom He seeks to preserve. That *requires* then that their freedom - not His mercy - becomes the *controlling* moral priority in His mind for both creation and salvation. **In which case, the doctrine of Divine Reprobation which Molinism is desperate to avoid, it runs headlong into regardless.** Molinism is thus collapsed by the very elaborate philosophical semantics it was invented to avoid – all because the pride of man abhors the explicit answer of scripture:

“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy... Therefore, He has mercy on whom He will and whom He will, He hardens” (Rom. 9:15, 18).

 **Sovereign grace alone explains this reality without contradiction. Scripture does not say God saves because conditions are optimal or because freedom finally cooperates but because He chooses to magnify His grace (Eph 1:5)**

God saves *because* He wills to show mercy. He does not create in order to maximize human autonomy, but to *glorify His grace*.

Molinism attempts to protect God’s goodness by appealing to freedom yet ends by making eternal salvation a *lessor* consideration to it: While willing to risk *eternal* conscious torment to preserve choices that occur in *limited time*. Scripture does the

opposite – placing God’s decision to show His mercy and magnify His grace, not human freedom, at the decisive moral center of redemptive history.

Molinist Objection

“We don’t mean or claim that God needed to have 6 billion in order to save the 1 billion. So, you are saying things we do not claim.”

My reply.

The Molinist’s Final Fork: Only Three Doors, All Destructive

✚ **Molinism claims that God, by “middle knowledge,” *knows for every individual what each would freely do in every possible circumstance.* Knowing this God then actualizes the version of *this* world that *best* satisfies His purposes.**

THE QUESTION THEY MUST AVOID: Did God *know* that the multitudes who perish would not believe under any circumstance?

There are only three possible answers.

Door One: God *knew* they would never believe

Molinism says this *is* the case, by reason of His “middle knowledge” of every individual person in every possible circumstance in every feasible world. So, God *knowingly* brought into existence persons whom He knew could not be saved in *any* feasible world. This requires then that their eternal ruin was not accidental, nor merely foreseen, but *structurally inevitable*. Again, no semantic word games can avoid this reality. In this case, Molinism has not escaped the doctrine of reprobation it desperately seeks to avoid.

- This is not a moral improvement over the Reformed position. It is worse, because the decree is now masked behind speculative counterfactuals that make the creation of the lost *necessary* to achieve the desired end of maximum saved.

Door Two: God did *not* know whether they would ever believe

If this is true, then Molinism collapses entirely. The whole purpose behind the invention of “middle knowledge” is to secure God’s *exhaustive* foreknowledge of

creaturely freedom. To deny that God knew whether these individuals would ever believe is to abandon Molinism in favor of a functional form of Open Theism.

- Here, Molinism does not merely weaken, it ceases to exist.

Door Three: God *could* have created only the saved

God *could* have created a world populated only by those who His “middle knowledge” foresaw would freely believe. In which case, no one would suffer eternal conscious torment.

But this move simply reintroduces “sovereign election” by another name. God now limits the human population to include only the redeemed, meaning the rest were excluded from existence altogether - not because they could not have been saved, but because God did not will their being.

- ✚ **That conclusion in its logical conclusion, would be morally, practically indistinguishable from the Reformed doctrine of sovereign-grace that Molinists most resist.**

The System Has No Escape

Molinism can survive *only so long as this question remains unasked*. Once it is asked, the system is forced through one of these three doors, and each door either:

1. recreates reprobation
2. collapses into Open Theism
3. concedes sovereign election outright.

- ✚ **The very problem Molinism was designed to solve is the very problem it cannot survive. And the very truth it despises remains – God has mercy on whom He chooses and whom He chooses, He hardens (Rom. 9: 14-18)**

In the final analysis, which world becomes “real” – “actualized”?

✚ Not the one which is *known*.
Not the one which is *possible*.
But this one which is **chosen** – knowing billions will suffer eternal, conscious torment as they experience the wrath of God Himself.