



**THE COLLAPSE
OF
PREVENIENT
GRACE**

Objection Answered: The Collapse of Prevenient Grace

The Arminian doctrine of prevenient grace asserts that God gives all people an equal, universal grace that restores the ability to believe. It supernaturally removes the “determinative power of sin” in equal measure from every person and essentially places all people individually in a morally, spiritually neutral state from which they can freely choose to accept or reject the gospel. Since this idea uses the word “grace” – synergists can honestly say “We affirm the grace of God is necessary for salvation.”

I intend to show that this doctrine is not merely unsupported by Scripture but is internally incoherent and collapses under its own claims. My conclusions will be exegetically based and not forced, but will be the natural, inevitable result of the following points.

Below are the biblical and logical reasons the doctrine cannot stand.

1. SCRIPTURE SHOWS UNEQUAL MEASURES OF GRACE

A. The Emmaus Road (Luke 24–32, 45)

Two disciples receive personal pursuit by Jesus, and an exhaustive exposition of the atonement in the Old Covenant by the Lord Himself. And finally supernatural illumination, and direct opening of their minds “to be able to understand the scriptures.”

- **This did not / does not happen to all sinners.**

B. Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9)

No other Pharisee received a supernatural, audible, visual, blinding Christophany or sovereign overpowering of unbelief as Saul (Paul)

C. Cornelius (Acts 10)

Angel, visions, providential ordering of Peter's steps to come to him - these are **not** universally given to all.

- **If prevenient grace had already restored equal ability to all, none of these extraordinary measures would have been necessary.**

D. Thomas the Doubter (John 20:24–29)

Thomas receives physical – “see and touch” confirmation of Christ's resurrection. Does God grant this to every other doubter / agnostic? Hardly!

E. The Parable of the Sower (Matt. 13:1–23)

According to Jesus' own interpretation of His parable, only *some* “hear and understand” (Matt. 13:23); others hear and do not understand (Matt 13:19).

- **Equal ability per Prevenient Grace simply cannot explain this. But must redact, ignore its obvious meaning and truth.**
- **Jesus explicitly roots the difference not in the hearers, but in the prior condition of the soil at the moment of receiving the “seed” of the word**

F. Paul's Companions (Acts 22:9)

At the same time Saul (Paul) received the supernatural visitation of the risen Lord, the men who were with him at that moment, saw the light but *did not understand the voice* that spoke to Saul personally.

- **Selective revelation / illumination / understanding contradicts equal restored ability.**

- Two men, one light, one voice — yet unequal understanding. Preventive grace *cannot* explain this divergence; election *can* (Acts 22:14)

2. UNEQUAL GRACE = ELECTION BY ANOTHER NAME

If grace is *equal* – as Preventive Grace teaches, Scripture is false.

If grace is *unequal* – as scripture expressly demonstrates, election is true and Preventive Grace is false.

- There is no third option.

3. THE INFINITE REGRESS PROBLEM

If preventive grace restores ability to believe or refuse, what happens when a person hears and is not immediately converted to faith but rejects the gospel?

Option 1: They lose the restored ability.

If Preventive Grace restores all sinners who are “bound by” what has been deemed “the determinative power of sin” per the doctrine, to the same state as Adam and Eve in the garden prior to the fall, then what happens if the sinner does not instantly believe and “accept” the gospel? It only took *one act* of disobedience to enslave humanity to sin’s power, so why would not the first rejection of the gospel do likewise? In which case the sinner was supposedly restored to moral neutrality - chose unbelief – enslaved by sin’s power thus requiring *another* supernatural work of Preventive Grace ad infinitum.

This results in endless cycles:

Grace → Ability → Rejection → Inability → Grace → Ability → Rejection...

- This is not possible per the doctrine of Prevenient Grace because God supposedly did this once – for all time and all people
- But the doctrine explicitly denies repeated applications of prevenient grace — leaving it *unable* to explain *how any sinner recovers from a single act of unbelief*.

Option 2: They permanently retain restored ability.

This would destroy total depravity - the condition which required God to do the whole “Prevenient Grace” thing in the first place. And turns grace into a universal and *permanent* spiritual upgrade – a thing which even synergists themselves reject.

4. REPEATED GOSPEL REJECTION

- Equal ability *cannot* explain why *some* believe immediately, some after decades, and some *never* at all.
- IF the decisive difference lies in each person, then Prevenient Grace made zero practical difference to the end-result.

5. DOCTRINAL COLLAPSE

Prevenient grace, for these reasons, is therefore shown to be:

1. **Openly contradictory to Scripture.**
2. **Logically incoherent.**
 - It renders grace non-effectual — a divine gesture that secures nothing, guarantees nothing, and explains nothing.
 - This is, in essence, *Pelagianism dressed in different clothing*.
3. **An open denial of the theological truth of *Sola Gratia* — Grace Alone.**

CONCLUSION

The biblical pattern is not universal ability but sovereign, effectual grace:

- God opens hearts *selectively* (Acts 16:14)
- God grants understanding *selectively* (Matt. 13:11)
- God *grants repentance* (2 Tim. 2:25)
- God *grants faith* (Phil. 1:29; 1 Tim. 1:14; 2 Peter 1:1-2)
- *The sheep* hear – with understanding - His voice (John 10:1-5, 26–27)
- *All* whom the Father gives *will* come (John 6:37)
- Jesus came to give eternal life *to* those the Father gives Him (John 17:2; Matt. 1:21)

This is *why* Luke’s summary in its context is the decisive refutation of synergistic views and the error of Prevenient Grace.

- “...*as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.*” (Acts 13:48)

- **Only... those “appointed *FOR* eternal life, believed.”**

Luke offers not merely a narrative detail, but a theological explanation — one that directly overturns the central claim of prevenient grace.

And if, as synergists argue, these Gentiles “glorified the word of the Lord,” and *therefore* were subsequently “appointed,” then the question becomes inescapable:

How did they understand the word well enough to glorify it, *unless* the ability to understand had already been sovereignly granted?

Understanding is itself a gift — as the entire sweep of Scripture testifies:

- “*He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures*” (Luke 24:45)
- “*The Lord opened her heart to pay attention*” (Acts 16:14)
- “*He helped those who had believed through grace*” (Acts 18:27)
- “*This is the one who hears the word and understands it*” (Matt. 13:23) — contrasted with “*hears... and does not understand it*” (13:19)

Thus, the synergistic argument becomes impossibly circular and evasive: they require the very understanding they deny God must sovereignly provide.

And all of this is for one reason: **the system cannot accept the conclusion Luke - inspired by the Holy Spirit - so plainly and inevitably arrived at.**

Sola Gratia, Soli DEO Gloria