

A few thoughts on “Free Will”

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Heb 13:9 *Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.*

2Ti 3:1-2 *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.*

For men shall be lovers of their own selves,

2Ti 4:3-4 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

One of the marks of the last days is the tendency for men to turn to different (divers) and strange (foreign to the Bible) doctrines. These false doctrines, which men will cling to tenaciously, are called “fables”, and that is because they are totally false. “They shall turn away their ears from the truth”. The essence of it is stated in 2Tim 3: 2 when it says that “men shall be lovers of their own selves”. There would be an inordinate and unscriptural occupation with “self love”. Self-love is the doctrine of “human autonomy“. It is men being preoccupied with what they can do by themselves apart from God. **Phil 2:21** *“For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's“*. This false doctrine of human autonomy known as self-love is zealously pursued in our age under the guises of self-improvement, self-acceptance, self-awareness, self-government and the doctrine of free will. These doctrines have been readily absorbed by the churches of our day even though they are not scriptural. It is the inroad of secular humanism creeping into the church. This is a part of the “falling away” which God tells us would take place in the last days (look up and compare: 2Thess.2: 3; 1Tim.4: 1; Jude 18; Jude 16; 2Pet. 2: 1-3). These false doctrines are part of the “New Age” spirituality which will result ultimately in the manifestation and acceptance of the “Anti-Christ”. “The man of sin”, as he is called, is the embodiment of every false ideal of human autonomy. He is man in isolation and independence from God. He is a New Age “Ascended Master” who represents all the best of human potential, that’s why millions will follow him thinking that he is Christ. He is the perfect man with perfect autonomy from God.

What does this have to do with “free will”? It has everything to do with it, because “free will” is a doctrine of the Devil and not a doctrine of God. When we go back to the first chapters of the Bible we learn that the fall of man is the direct result of man exercising “free will” in isolation from God’s clearly revealed will. The temptation and fall of Adam was the invention of Lucifer when he lied to Adam about his human autonomy. “Yeah, Hath God said”? This was his avenue of approach to get man to sin...question God and exercise free will in isolation from God. “Adam, why don’t you make up your own mind and decide for yourself what is right and what is wrong?” Sin entered the human race through the invention of Satan. Satan invented the doctrine of free will and convinced Adam and Eve to use it even as He convinced a third of the angels of heaven to use it in the angelic rebellion which resulted in the fall of the angels into demonism.

Someone is sure to object at this point and say: “But God gave Adam and Eve free will”. But that is not correct. God gave Adam and Eve clear instructions to “obey” the Divine will. “Disobedience” was the sin which leads to death. “Obedience” is what man was

created for. As an “image bearer” Adam was to reflect God Himself, and was to live forever in righteousness and true holiness. Man’s volition was created to worship and commune with God himself, (just like the angels) and was not created to be prostituted by sin. Free will (human autonomy) was the creation of the Devil. He invented the scheme of self-determination apart from God. Scripture clearly reveals that he is a deceiver, a liar, and a murderer. And especially in the last days will he attempt to “deceive even the very elect” through his false prophets, teachers and doctrines. His godless agenda has been perpetuated throughout all of human history, and it is difficult to separate the truth from his errors, but the Bible is God’s truth and it says: “Let God be true and every man a liar”. If there is any freedom at all, it is in Christ who said ‘Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you FREE’. But even that is not freedom of the will, it is freedom from the lie, and restored freedom to worship and commune with God in obedience. It is freedom from sin. Human autonomy can never result in freedom of the will. Such a thing is a clever deception of the Devil. He has always tried to hide his true agenda from man, and isolate man from God’s truth in the process.

The objection is made that to not believe in the free will is “irrational” and contradictory to human psychology. Naturally we expect this argument from people who’s thinking is purely “humanistic” in its approach. But we have to be reminded that the Bible is not a book of rationalistic philosophy. It is a Book of Divine revelation, and as such it contains many doctrines which are “irrational” by human standards. But that is precisely why human standards cannot be used to interpret the Bible. Many of our key doctrinal concepts are “irrational” from human viewpoint. But this “irrationality” is falsely perceived. The proper term is that these doctrines are not “irrational”, rather they are “Trans-rational”. To this class belongs the doctrines of: “Creation out of nothing”, the doctrine of the “Trinity”, the doctrine of “Miracles”, The doctrine of the “Incarnation” and “The Virgin Birth”, The doctrine of the “Resurrection”, the doctrine of “The second Coming of Christ”, the “Rapture”, the “Indwelling of the Holy Spirit”, the doctrine of the “Immortality of the soul”, the doctrine of “Eternity”, “Heaven”, “Hell”, and also the doctrine of “Human Agency or Human Volition”. We can never expect to rationally understand any of these doctrines, but we are absolutely expected to believe them and promulgate what the Bible says about them, whether we understand them or not. Without these “Trans-rational” doctrines, we would have a Bible that was completely devoid of supernaturalism. To take the supernatural out of the Bible is to utterly reduce it to a pile of worthless paper. We cannot endorse anything that robs the Bible of it’s supernaturalistic content (rational, irrational or otherwise). The Bible is God’s disclosure project to the entire world about the supernatural realities and their sure existence. God delivered His revelation to us in time and space to validate the overarching dimensions of non-time and non-space. The Bible is all about the supernatural, the trans-rational and the Divine Being who occupies the “Cosmic Throne”.

“Humanism” and “Luciferianism” are both to be rejected by men and angels. Luciferianism led angels to sin and fall into outer darkness. Humanism had the same result with man in the garden, plunging him into eternal darkness and separation from God. God chose to save man but not the angels that sinned. We don’t know why, but most scholars believe that it has to do with man’s creation as “image-bearer”. Man was

created in the image of God. Angels were not. This doctrine is of course one of those trans-rational doctrines, because God is a Spirit and has no image. But in this is the secret of man's image. God's image was fully displayed in Jesus Christ. He said "When thou hast seen me, thou hast seen the Father". "In Him was all the fullness of the Godhead BODILY". So the image of God is in Christ, and man is created in the image of God. So that the first man Adam was created in the image of the second Adam... Jesus Christ! We cannot understand this wonderful truth, (it's trans-rational), but Jesus was the second Adam!

Adam is God's image-bearer. Adam's created will was identical to Jesus' will of whom he was the image. I have already said that Adam did not have free will. Free will was the invention of Satan to get man to function in human autonomy, apart from God and apart from His will. I will repeat what I already said: "Obedience" is what man was created for. As an "image bearer" Adam was to reflect God Himself, and was to live forever in righteousness and true holiness. Man's volition was created to worship and commune with God himself, (just like the angels) and was not created to be prostituted by sin. Human free will (human autonomy) was the creation of the Devil. He invented the scheme of self-determination apart from God. This concept is clearly founded upon scripture as I will now show you. Adam's image-bearing will was the same as the will of Jesus Christ who was the Divine pattern after whom Adam was formed.

So to understand the will of man, as he was created, we have to look at the will of Jesus. Before I show you the scriptural teaching on this, I have to point out one distinction. Jesus' human will and His Divine will are not to be confused. As God, He could will and do anything. All that God can will and do; Christ, as God, had willed and done. In the final analysis only God has true free will. He can do, and does do, exactly what He wants to do, and He always does it. Jesus willed the universe into existence. "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made". Jesus as God had perfect free-will. But Jesus as man, did not have free-will. He had a perfect human will. Jesus was the perfect man, even as God created Adam to be. So let's look at His human will.

The first recorded words of Jesus address this issue. It is obviously important because it is the very first thing which is recorded of His spoken words. When He was twelve years old here is what He said: "**Lk 2:49** *And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.*" Notice it "I MUST BE ABOUT MY FATHERS BUSINESS". Had Adam and Eve spoken these words to the serpent, they would have remained in a state of perfect human volition, and would not have bought into the Devil's plan for human autonomy. As a man, Jesus willed always to do His Father's business, and He never once acted in human autonomy. **Jn 6:38** *"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."* What could be more clear than this? As the perfect man, with a perfect human will as God intended it to be, Jesus said that His will was to do God's will. **Jn 5:17** *"But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."* **Jn 4:34** *"Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."* **Jn 8:29** *"I do always those things that*

please him.” Obedience to God was His great compulsion. That’s why He used the word “must” when speaking about it. **Jn 9:4** *“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.”* There was nothing free about Jesus’ perfect human will. That’s why He “MUST” do the works that man can do while it is day.

But these are not isolated verses. The perfect human will, as illustrated by Jesus, is to always be occupied and oriented to the will and worship of God. This was man’s created purpose. This was how God intended man’s perfect human will to always function. **Psa 40:8** *“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”* **Mat 6:10** *“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”* Man was created to do God’s will on earth. That has never changed throughout all the eons of time. **Jn 6:38** *“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.”* **Mat 12:50** *“For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”* **Mat 26:39** *“...nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”* **Mat 26:42** *“...thy will be done.”* **Mk 14:36** *“And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.”* **Lk 22:42** *“Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”* These wonderful verses point us to the correct understanding of the perfect created function of the human will. Man’s will, created in the image of God, is to be occupied with and to do the will of God, and not the will of self autonomy. Man’s will was never free-will, and it never will be free-will. Free-will was manufactured by Lucifer. It is a lie. It is murder to the human soul. It caused sin to enter God’s created universe, first angels falling, and then man falling.

There are plenty of verses which show the proper function and limitation of the human will. There are also verses which show the extent of the corruption of the will as a result of the fall into sin. Jesus spoke about the nature of the corrupt will when He was addressing the Pharisees: **Jn 8:44** *“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.”* What would they will to do? The will of their father the Devil. That certainly doesn’t sound like free will. The same sort of thing is said about believers...it is the direct antithesis to what he said about the Devil’s children. **Jn 14:23** *“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words.”* So, the Devil’s children do his will, and the children of God will keep His words. So it follows that there is a change of the will in conversion. Men go from doing the Devil’s will to doing the will of God. But neither of these things can be considered as free will. Even this great matter of the new birth is not an exercise of the human will. **Jn 1:13** *“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”* The Human will is thus inoperative in the new birth. In Philippians the Apostle Paul addresses this very thing when he says: *“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure”* (2: 13). James also points it out: **James 1:18** *“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.”* Human will is inoperative in the new birth, and as in everything, God’s will reigns supreme. Fallen man has no will to serve God, and the new man in Christ Jesus has a will which is activated to serve God as man was created to do. **Psa 110:3** *“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.”* The believer has

an activated human will to serve God because of God's inward spiritual work in him, and not because of anything innate in the human will. **Heb 13:21** *"Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."* So, it is the Sovereignty of God which changes the will of fallen men back into a will that is capable of pleasing and serving God. **Phillipians 2:13** *"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."*

Isaiah makes an interesting assessment about the human will when he says: **Isa 26:12** *"LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us."* Notice here: the extent of the Sovereignty of God; "Thou hast wrought all OUR WORKS in us". This is a wonderful and difficult assessment to understand, but it is not isolated. There are many assessments just like this. Consider: **Psa 57:2** *"I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me."* **Heb 13:21** *"Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."* We can do His will, because He works that which is well pleasing to Himself in us. **Rom 8:28** *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."* These verses not only assert the unlimited sphere of the Divine Sovereignty, but they also clearly establish the limited nature of the human volition. Man clearly has no free will.

Now I am certain at this point I will be asked about obedience. Man is commanded to obey God, not only in moral issues like the ten commandments, but in everything. Doesn't this imply a free will? The answer is no. These concepts teach human responsibility and not free will. Man, as we have seen, was created to obey God, to worship Him and to be in perfect fellowship with Him. There is never a contradiction between human responsibility and Divine sovereignty. A perfect example of this is in the great commission. God clearly commands us to be obedient in the proclamation of the gospel. Yet, he says in **Act 13:48** *"as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."* So the Divine Sovereignty, in the act of believing in Christ, is established through human responsibility in the obedience of the gospel proclamation. Sovereignty and human responsibility are not mutually exclusive rather they are inclusive and interdependent. So in the final analysis it is "The Lord who adds to the church". **Acts 2:47** *"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."*

Then there is the issue of evil deeds. If God is Sovereign, then what about the godless workings of evil men? How do these fit in the picture? Let me say, that nothing happens apart from the Divine will. God in the final analysis has absolute free will. He can will and do as He sees fit. All that He desires to do, He does do. He is after all on the throne of the universe. Consider this verse... **Gen 50:20** *"But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive."* Here we have not only the notion that God can and does override evil deeds, but that He even overrides evil thoughts! That is quite a concept. The Sovereignty of God even extends to the evil thoughts of evil beings. This harkens back to Joseph's brothers in Genesis 34. We are told that they "hated" (4) him and they "conspired against him"

(18). This was an evil conspiracy, and Joseph later revealed that God had an overriding Sovereign purpose in all of it. (Look up Gen. 45: 5-8). **Psalm 105: 17** says that God “*sent a man before them, even Joseph who was sold for a servant.*” This is language similar to that used by Peter in Acts when he tell the people that with “*wicked hands*” they took Christ and “*crucified Him*”. There is no doubt about the wicked deed which they had done, but Peter says clearly that they did it according to “*the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*” (**Acts 2: 23**). That human thought is controlled by God is indicated in many places which I will not go into. Such as when God knew the thoughts of men as in the case Judas, The woman at the well, Pharaoh, the Pharisees, and even ourselves, as in when we don’t KNOW what to pray for: **Rom 8:26** “*Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*” This is considered “OUR INFIRMITIES”. What are our infirmities? One is clearly stated “WE KNOW NOT WHAT WE SHOULD PRAY FOR”. It say’s that we “ought” to know this, but we don’t. This is an infirmity...one more factor of the disease of sin in the human soul.

While I have not been exhaustive by any means, I hope that these thoughts will help anyone who reads them to evaluate their thinking concerning this important doctrine. Our thinking and our teaching needs to reflect God’s viewpoint and not humanism in any form. **2Cor 10: 4** “*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*” (II Corinthians 10:4). Strongholds, imaginations, things that exalt themselves against the Divine knowledge, carnal things and every thought are to be brought into obedience to Christ. That’s why Paul say’s “*Let this MIND be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*”. God’s MIND in Christ, includes all the functions of that mind, including the function of the human will. So we are also told elsewhere: “*Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your MIND, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect WILL OF GOD*”.

I offer these simple thoughts to you , dear reader, in hopes that you will think God’s thoughts after Him, and that you will conform your mind, heart and will to His revealed truths of scripture. There are tremendous strongholds against which believers must "stand" and "fight." These strongholds are non-divine patterns of thinking which have a profound effect on our feelings, and on how we respond to the circumstances in our lives. Most importantly they keep us in bondage so that we can't appreciate and enjoy our true spiritual privileges and position in Christ. I realize that it is not an easy matter to cast down the “imaginations” and false doctrines of the world. Perhaps the most difficult imagination is this persistent and perilous notion of free-will. But if we stand against these errors of humanism, if we don’t think more highly of ourselves than we should, and if we humbly submit to the cosmic Lordship of our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ, we will be truly blessed of God, because such a posture honors Him and magnifies His Glory. We should get practice in the exercise of our perfect human will, here on earth, because in eternity, that will be our sole employment. All who are in

heaven are occupied fully and eternally with worship, adoration, praise, submission, righteousness and true holiness. The only free will in heaven, is the free will of God Himself. Let us acclimate to it right now in our thinking, living and witnessing in this dark world. May God help you in this glorious adventure to “*work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling*”.