

THE FREE WILL OF MAN

Text: Genesis 2:17

INTRO: We want to notice some passages of Scripture that have bearing on the subject of man's free will. Religious Protestantism is hopelessly divided into two camps: (1) Those who believe that man acts on the basis of free will and (2) those who believe that both the life style & eternal destiny of each individual has been predestined by God & by God alone. Obviously these doctrines cannot both be true. We will show that God has endowed human beings with the power to choose between right and wrong.

I. GOD ADDRESSES MAN AS A CREATURE OF CHOICE.

Deut 11:26-28, "Behold, I set before you today a blessing & a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; & the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known.

Josh 24:15, And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me & my house, we will serve the Lord.

A. Note that in our text, Adam had the power to choose between right & wrong, & his choice would determine whether he would die or live forever.

B. Fact is, no command of God is of any consequence unless man has the free will to accept or reject that command. God need not say "Thou shalt not murder" to a man that He Himself has already programmed to become a murderer. The Calvinistic theory of predestination, if it were true, would destroy all value of Divine revelation & of gospel preaching.

II. GOD GRIEVES OVER THOSE WHO HARDEN THEIR HEARTS TO HIS COMMANDMENTS.

Gen 6:5-6, Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

How could this be if those wicked men & women were simply doing what God had already programmed them to do?

A. In connection with the Calvinistic theory we often hear talk of someone's "time to die." My mother believed each person had his own set time to die.

1. There are some passages that mention a time to die.
Eccl. 3:2. But does each person have a set time that cannot be altered under any circumstances?

2. Several passages teach that our own actions may sometimes determine when we die.

Eccl 7:17, Do not be overly wicked, nor be foolish: Why should you die before your time?

Prov 10:27, The fear of the Lord prolongs days but the years of the wicked will be shortened.

Hezekiah, 2 Kings 20:1-6, 15 years
People of Nineveh, Jonah 3:4, 40 days
600,000 were killed in the dest of Jeru, but they didn't have to die then.

Luke 13:34, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets & stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, & you were not willing!

NOTE: Their abuse of free will kept them from being saved.

III. GOD HAS NO PLEASURE IN THE DEATH OF THE WICKED.

Ezek 33:11, Say to them, "As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way & live: turn, turn from your evil ways: for why should you die, O house of Israel?"

2 Peter 3:9

Psa 116:15, Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

IV. MAN MAY BE SAVED FROM THE CONDEMNATION OF SIN IF HE SO CHOOSES. HE CAN BE SAVED ONLY BY OBEDIENCE TO THE WILL OF GOD.

John 6:37, The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

Rom 10:13, For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

Matt. 7:21; Acts 22:16; Heb. 5:9; John 14:6

CONCLUSION: Denial of free will may be a feeble human attempt to flee our responsibility. That doctrine makes God alone responsible for every sin. God is not guilty!

And the Spirit & the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. (Rev. 22:17).

Liberty Hill, TX, April 5, 1964
Cox Springs, TX, April 16, 1964
Jonestown, TX, August 3, 1969
La Porte, TX, September 20, 1981
Exton, PA, January 20, 1985
Exton, PA, September 30, 1990

Wrightsville, PA, September 30, 1990
Shiloh, Mexia, TX, November 29, 1992