

The Question of Man's Free Will

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- I. You must define your terms. What does free will mean?
 - A. Human Responsibility? Yes, man is responsible.
 - B. Objective Choice? Yes, man has a choice set before him in the Gospel.
 - C. Is man a machine? No, he is God's image bearer.
 - D. Is man's will a slave to sin? Yes.
 - E. Is man's will under God's control? Yes.
 - F. Does man have the ability to do spiritual good before God? No.

- II. What is "freedom"?
 - A. We must begin with a contrast between Biblicism and humanism.

The Bible	Humanism
True freedom is the desire and the ability to do what is right., i.e. you ought to do.	Man is neutral and his will has the ability to do evil or good. True freedom ought not to do.

- B. Important questions to answer:
 - 1. Is God free? Yes. ([Dan. 4:34-35](#); [Job 42:2](#); [Psa. 115:3](#))
 - 2. Can God sin? No. ([James 1:13](#))
 - 3. Did Christ have a free will? Yes. ([Matt. 26:39](#))
 - 4. Could He sin? No. ([Heb. 4:15](#))
 - 5. Do the saints in Heaven have a free will? Yes. ([Heb. 12:23](#))
 - 6. Can they sin in Heaven? No. ([Heb. 12:23](#))
 - 7. Will they be able to sin in the eternal state? No. ([1 John 3:2-3](#))

- III. Deal with one issue at a time.
 - A. Is man a slave to sin? Yes! ([Rom. 3:10-18](#); [6:17](#))
 - B. Does God's Sovereignty control man's will? Yes!
 - 1. General statements ([Dan. 4:34-35](#); [Eph. 1:11](#))
 - 2. Specific statements ([Pro. 21:1](#); [Acts 4:27-28](#))

Special Note: Without God's sovereign control of the will of man, the concept of a verbal, plenary, infallible, inspired Bible is impossible.

- IV. Does the natural man have the ability to do spiritual good before God? No! ([Rom. 3:10-18](#); [8:7-8](#); [1 Cor. 2:14](#); [12:3](#); [John 6:44, 65](#))

V. Remember that this question has four different answers.

Four-Fold State of Man			
Pre-Fall	Lost	Regenerate	Eternal State
total ability	no ability	growing ability	total ability
perfection of the will	bondage of the will	partial freedom of the will	perfected free will for all eternity

VI. The Bible and “Free Will”

The issue of man’s supposed “free will” is more philosophical than biblical due to several facts:

1. The Bible never refers to “free will” in the Arminian sense.
2. It became relevant during the Reformation only as is related to the issue of good works.
3. It is usually framed today in the context of faculty psychology that teaches that man has a will, a mind, and emotions.

VII. Free Will in Modern Philosophy

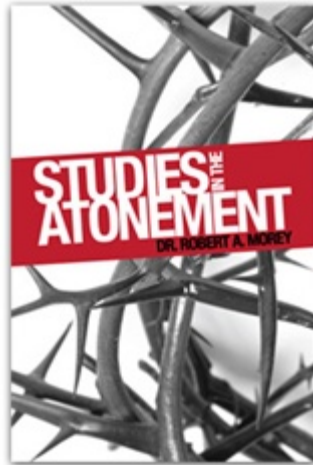
A. “Free will” in some modern philosophies means that the universe is based not on divine Providence but on pure chance, luck and ultimate contingency. This is actually a form of atheism and no Christian should support it.

B. “Free will” in some modern philosophies means that man is not fatalistically determined in his thoughts, words and deeds by irrational forces such as genetics or environmental factors. This is in agreement with the biblical view of man in which man has dominion over the world instead of the world having dominion over man.

Conclusion

Man lost his ability to please God when Adam and Eve fell into sin and guilt. Thus we do not have the ability to do good works or merit our salvation. The Reformers were absolutely right on this issue.

Recommended Book and CD:



Studies in the Atonement

Dr. Robert Morey demonstrates the forensic or judicial nature of justification with clear, scriptural proof. He lists over twenty references illustrating the forensic nature of justification.

This book reveals why justification is needed and how it is the backbone of the Gospel. It shows how a Holy God is able to be just and yet justify sinners at the same time.

There are many helpful charts found in the book which clarify and illustrate different aspects of the atonement. The Trinitarian emphasis of this book is evident. Salvation is presented as planned by God the Father, accomplished by God the Son, and applied by God the Holy Spirit, blessed God, Three in One.

Free Will & God's Sovereignty

Is God sovereignly in control of the world, or is man? Is the universe run by chance, or does God have some choice about the universe he made? God is in control, and this lecture definitively answers the question.



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