

# The Biblical Harmony Between the Sovereign Will of God and the Free Will of Humankind

“He who does the will of God abides forever” (1John 2:17).

[Conclusion]

# The Freewill Of Humankind

- Freewill was given to humankind from the beginning.
  - Gen. 4:7 - “If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.”
  - Deut. 30:19 - “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live.”
  - Joshua 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 and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

# The Freewill Of Humankind

- A choice is demanded, and therefore the exercise of free will is required. We choose to present ourselves before sin or obedience.
  - Rom. 6:16 - “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?”

# The Freewill Of Humankind

- The invitation is extended to “whoever desires.” The Lord will not force any to be saved, and will not turn away any who desire to be saved.
  - Rev. 22:17 - “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.”

# The Freewill Of Humankind

- God does not command what we are not able to do. Thus, 'all men everywhere' may freely choose to repent.
  - Acts 17:30 - "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent."

# The Free Will Of Humankind Is Essential To Salvation

- God has decreed the conditions of salvation that all men can meet.
- Everyone must believe in Christ.
  - Mark 16:15-16 - “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.’”
  - John 3:14-15 - “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”
- The scriptures teach that faith is a condition of salvation, and that everyone in the world has the capacity to meet that condition.

# The Free Will Of Humankind Is Essential To Salvation

- Everyone must repent of sin.
  - Acts 17:30-31 - “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”
  - 2Peter 3:9 - “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”
- The scriptures teach that repentance is a condition of salvation, and that everyone can meet that condition.

# The Free Will Of Humankind Is Essential To Salvation

- Everyone must confess Christ and be baptized.
  - Matt. 10:32 - “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.”
  - Acts 2:38-39 - “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.’”
- The message to all, whoever God calls by the Gospel, is that everyone must repent and be baptized for remission of sins.

# The Free Will Of Humankind Is Essential To Salvation

- The Scriptures clearly teach that salvation is conditional, and that every person is able to meet those conditions.
  - Rom. 10:13-14, 16-17, 21 - “For ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’ 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ... 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our report?’ 17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God... 21 But to Israel he says: ‘All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people.’”

# The Free Will Of Humankind Is Essential To Salvation

- If salvation is not conditional, why did God state conditions?
- If not everyone can meet the conditions, why did God insist that they be preached to everyone?

# The Free Will Of Humankind Is Essential To Salvation

- God grants to each person the power to accept or reject salvation.
- If as Calvinism teaches, there are no conditions man can meet that will affect whether or not God saves him, then man has absolutely no choice regarding his salvation or damnation. If God chooses the man, he will be saved regardless of man's choice. If God does not choose the man, he will be lost regardless of his choice.
- Each person is able to choose to meet the conditions of salvation. Why would God say these things if people have no power to choose whether or not to meet the conditions necessary to salvation?

# The Free Will Of Humankind Is Essential To Salvation

- God told them to choose life.
  - Deut. 30:15-19 - “See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, 16 in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. 17 But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, 18 I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. 19 I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live.”

# The Free Will Of Humankind Is Essential To Salvation

- God promised blessings to Israel if they obey - Deut. 28:1-14
- And curses if they disobey Him - Deut. 28:15-68
- They were told to choose God - Ex. 32:26; 1Kings 18:21
- They were ordered to choose good - Heb. 11:24-25; Luke 10:42
- God reasons with men; He does not compel them against their will - Isa. 1:18-20
- Some chose evil - Matt. 23:37, 13:14-15; Rev. 22:17; Luke 7:30

# The Free Will Of Humankind Is Essential To Salvation

- Each person has a role in determining his own destiny.
  - 1Peter 1:22 - “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth...”
  - Rom. 6:13, 17-18 - “Do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God...  
17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”

# The Free Will Of Humankind Is Essential To Salvation

- 2Cor. 8:5 - “And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.”
- Phil. 2:12 - “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”
- 1Tim. 4:16 - “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”
- Acts 2:40 - “And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation.’”
- 2Cor. 5:20 - “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.”
- In view of these Scriptures, how can one conclude that we are “totally passive” in salvation?

# The Free Will Of Humankind Is Essential To Salvation

- God is not a respecter of persons.
  - Rom. 2:6-11 - “Who will render to each one according to his deeds: 7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness--indignation and wrath, 9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; 10 but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 11 For there is no partiality with God.”

# The Free Will Of Humankind Is Essential To Salvation

- God is not a respecter of persons.
  - Acts 10:34-35 - “Then Peter opened his mouth and said: ‘In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. 35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.’”
- If God chooses to save some but not others, either the choice must be based on the conduct of the people (hence, conditional) or else God is a respecter of persons.
- For God to grant eternal life to those who do not choose to meet the conditions, or for Him to punish those who do meet the conditions, would constitute respect of persons.

# The Free Will Of Humankind Is Essential To Salvation

- One who is saved may later become lost.
- If we can show that people, once saved, later so acted as to be lost, then we have proven that salvation must be conditional, and Calvinism is in error.

# The Free Will Of Humankind Is Essential To Salvation

- Those who have been bought by the blood of Jesus can yet deny Him and be destroyed.
  - 2Peter 2:1-2 - “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.”
- The solution to the problem of falling from grace?
  - 2Peter 1:10 - “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble.”

# Does Conflict Exist Between The Sovereignty Of God And The Free Will Of Humankind?

- Does sovereignty demand absolute control? Is it possible for God to be sovereign if people are able to act in ways that are contrary to his will?
- Certainly not! The conflict was generated by two parties teaching extreme, warped doctrines 350 years after the Gospel was preached.

# Does Conflict Exist Between The Sovereignty Of God And The Free Will Of Humankind?

- Theological conundrum: Why is not all of God's will inviolate?
- God's will also features God's determination to give free will to human beings, to not compel or coerce humans into believing in Him, or to be forced to love Him.
- Thus, God has determinations for people, but people may not choose to fulfill those determinations.

# Does Conflict Exist Between The Sovereignty Of God And The Free Will Of Humankind?

- God's will takes more than one form:
  - Permanent will - Absolute and unalterable by anyone but God.
  - Revealed will - Revealed, unchangeable instructions for humankind.
  - Unrevealed will - Unknown, unknowable plans of God.
  - Requisite will - Commands given to humankind that require human will to complete; never without consequences.
  - Permissive will - God allows a choice without imposed consequences.

# Does Conflict Exist Between The Sovereignty Of God And The Free Will Of Humankind?

- Free will implies the ability to make choices within some constraints.
- We must learn to see God's sovereignty including a permissive element.
- A consistent theme running through the Bible is humanity's rebellion against God, and His work of bringing redemption to humanity.
- Throughout all of Bible history, humanity is pictured as acting contrary to God's revealed will. Repeatedly they are called to act in a certain way. Yet often they choose to follow their own way.
- To accept Divine determinism or control would make God ultimately responsible for their disobedience to His revealed will.

# The Biblical Harmony Between the Sovereign Will of God and the Free Will of Humankind

- People can take one of two extremes in regard to this question. Some emphasize the sovereignty of God to the point that human beings are little more than robots simply doing what they have been sovereignly programmed to do.
- Others emphasize free will to the point of God not having complete control and/or knowledge of all things.
- Neither of these positions is Biblical. The truth is that God does not violate our wills by choosing us and redeeming us. Rather, He changes our hearts by His love, blessings, and word so that our wills choose Him.
- 1John 4:19 - "We love Him because He first loved us."