

The Doctrine of Free Will

Written and compiled by Gary Kukis

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “**For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall be have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.”** (John 3:16–18). “**I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!**” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). **If we acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness** (1John 1:9). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

I have only begun this doctrine; there is much more to do.

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Preface: The free will of man is one of the most interesting topics. There are both believers and unbelievers who deny that such a thing even exists.

This section was taken from lesson #095 in the **Basic Exegesis of Exodus** series ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Free will, God, evolution and politics:

One of the most difficult things to understand—even though we all have it and use it—is free will. Every person in the world can choose for or against God—specifically, for or against His Son. Many people today live to the age of 70 and older; and amazingly, some will spend every moment of their lives in rebellion against God, not wanting anything to do with Him. And, it is not as if these people simply lack the knowledge. I know many atheists who spend all of their lives resisting God, some of them actually learning more about certain parts of the Bible than the average Christian, using this acquired knowledge to bolster their reasons to reject God. From time to time, many of them even appear to have legitimate objections; but even when you clear up their objections, that negative volition is still there. I am not aware of any atheist, who, after having 3 or 4 objections cleared up, say, “Okay, you have presented

some good arguments. What must I do to be saved?" Most of the time they will not acknowledge that you are given them a good argument or explanation.

No doubt there are yet millions of Jews in this world today who have heard the gospel. They know about Jesus, and yet, they choose to reject Him (on the other hand, millions of Jews today have believed in Jesus). As an aside, interestingly enough, Jews who believe in Jesus often believe themselves becoming more Jewish as a result of exercising faith in Christ—or more authentically Jewish. This makes sense, as they are accepting and believing in the Messiah sent to them by their God.

What we find throughout the Bible is a clear indication that people make decisions, acting in accordance with their free will, some believing in the God of Moses, and others completely rejecting the Lord.

Free will is a fascinating aspect of the human experience, and when we isolate our free will relationship with God from all other free will actions, we sometimes come up with some very odd theories. Ultra Calvinism maintains that, when it comes to God, we really have no free will, but God simply chooses us, presents us with irresistible grace, and we are drawn to Him, unable to resist. I have not studied Calvin deeply enough to know whether this is what he himself believed, but 5-point Calvinism takes the position that God irresistibly draws us to Him, and that we cannot resist this. The logical result of believing 5-point Calvinism is, no believer believes in Jesus Christ completely of his own free will; he is simply irresistibly drawn to God, his free will not being a factor. They believe that, only if they are irresistibly drawn to the Lord by God will they choose to believe. The only will that matters in their theology is God's sovereignty. Our free will is never really an issue. This is despite the hundreds of passages which seem to stress the importance of individual choice.

Similarly, I have talked and argued with people on *Christian versus Atheist* facebook pages, and they present a very similar view to 5-point Calvinism, but from the other side. Christians believe in the God of the Bible; and atheists do not. And these atheists put the onus upon Christians to convince them, by argument, that there is a God and that God is the God of the Bible. Even though many of these people understand Christianity and many have heard and understood the gospel message, it does not matter what approach that you take with them, your argument and reasoning is never going to be enough to convince them. In fact, many such people, no matter how well you reason with them, will always, at the very end, accuse you of lacking sufficient evidence and/or reasoning skills to convince them. They may say, "Your argument is just not persuasive enough" (or words to that effect). However, the problem is and will always be with their own volition.

If you have ever studied Christian apologetics, you will find that there are a great many logical reasons to believe in a Creator God, to believe in the Savior Jesus, and to believe the Bible is the Word of God. Josh McDowell has written many excellent books on these topics. I found several of McDowell's books more much logical and persuasive than books that I have read, written by atheists and skeptics.

Speaking of atheists: many of them present the idea that they themselves are random events which have occurred in a random universe, and their thoughts and thinking are nothing more than random electronic signals running through an evolved brain sloshing around in their skulls. They do not see themselves as having been created or designed. Their life is a happy (or unhappy) evolutionary accident. Their excuse before God will be, "You did not do enough to convince me that You are God. Therefore, my rejection of You is Your fault!"

In all other aspects of life, these same people will accept their free will as a very real thing; even to the point of accepting the idea that, if a man wants to think of himself as a woman (or vice versa), which concept is completely an act of free will that defies all biological science and logic. The current political climate is, we should accept this and even celebrate it; and a preponderance of atheists do (most atheists appear to be very liberal—I should say *leftist* to be more accurate).

At this time (I write this in 2019 & 2020), there are climate science fanatics and climate science deniers; and both sets of people believe that science is on their side. We have had a very popular politician on the left recently say that we have 12 years remaining (I believe until there is no *going back* on our denial of science) (and, of course, lest you be worried, this problem can be solved if he or she and members of his or her party are elected to power). The side which we take in politics is very much related to free will; and where we place our faith—because, quite obviously, you or I have *not* done any actual climate research ourselves (reading a few articles from the internet is not really climate research¹).

Furthermore, it is clear that our politics is very closely related to our belief that the world is coming to an end this century due to global warming (or not). One side, for the most part, believes that earth will be inundated with water, as we heat up due to man's use of fossil fuels; and the other side, for the most part, does not believe that man can destroy planet earth or even himself. Interestingly enough, these beliefs often highly correlate with whether or not a person believes in the Christian God. The Christian is far more likely to reject the *end-of-the-world* predictions of global warming alarmists; and the atheist is far more likely to believe these warnings (notice the word *believe*).

Speaking of politics, we have had two recent presidents, Barack Obama and Donald Trump, about whom there seems to be an undeniable split in the thinking of most Americans. One set of Americans, when they hear a negative news story about Donald Trump, believe it. Often, they believe that any negative news story about him was well-researched and well-documented, and that it is true; and that he should be removed from office (a significant percentage of Americans *still* believe that candidate Trump colluded with Russia to steal the 2016 election). Another equally large group of Americans reject virtually every negative story about him, either as not true or as exaggerated or as unimportant. I could have said essentially the same thing about President Obama when he was in office.

I have seen lifelong friendships dissolved because two people have opposite ideas about Trump (or about Obama); and I have seen family members sever ties for the same reason. Essentially, these lifelong friends or relatives often go their separate ways, not because one of cheated or harmed the other person, but simply because they *believe* in different things. Again, note the word *believe*. A person's faith/free will is the underpinning of most everything a person is passionate about—and it ought to be clear that, in the United States in the year 2020, there is a great deal of passion for diametrically opposed candidates and systems of government that people support.

My point in giving these illustrations is to indicate that we have free will. In politics, many of us choose a side and often are vociferous about defending it (more so in the past decade than any time in the past century). With regards to climate change, some of us believe that we or our children will see the end of this inhabitable earth and others of us believe that to be hooey. These beliefs are surely not a result of scientific fact, or else, virtually everyone would believe them (just as virtually everyone believes in gravity or in a spherical earth).

¹ Instead of speaking of climate change, I could have used the illustration of evolution instead.

There are even strong disagreements in the scientific community, and it may be surprising to know that, there is not a 97% agreement that electing the right political party is going to save us from this climate crisis. Even if 97% of scientists believe that the earth is in a warming trend (which figure is strongly contested), this is not the same as having the belief that an inhabitable earth will no longer be a thing in the 21st century or that electing politicians from one particular party is going to solve this problem. Even with scientists, there is this thing called free will, and it plays an important part in what each scientist believes. In case you wonder, *how can that be?* Here is how that is possible: scientists determine for themselves what constitutes evidence of this or that belief (politically-charged climate change and evolution are both concepts which a person believes or does not believe, scientist or not). And one set of people say, X, Y and Z prove my point of view absolutely; and another set of people disagree vehemently; believing that X, Y and Z prove nothing. What is the true basis for these disagreements? Free will. Free will is at the heart of these passionate disagreements.

About these particular topics, myself and two of my brothers think one way; my mother and a middle brother think the other. We were all raised in the same household in roughly the same environment, seeing the same television and news programs, reading the same newspapers. Somewhere in this similar environment, free will plays an essential part in these opinions. I have a set of values which I believe in, and they form my world view and my beliefs (which I believe is very much centered upon the Word of God); and yet, I have a brother whose beliefs, as a whole, are not really much different than mine (as compared to the thinking of other cultures), who also attends church; and yet, his views and mine are polar opposite in many issues of the day.

My belief is, that, fundamentally, all of this comes down to free will.

If we accept free will as being a very real part of our daily lives, then logically, our free will functions when it comes to God. If I am able to come to a set of free will conclusions, based upon what I read about President Trump or about global warming; then has God not also made me *able* to exercise my free will regarding Him?

That God has given us free will seems like an obvious truth to me, having given many examples of areas where our free will functions. If we exercise our free will throughout our lives, regarding the things that we do or choose not to do; then does this not mean that we have a free will when it comes to God and to God's plan?

There is certainly another dimension to this which I did not mention—grace and free will. It should be clear, based upon what we read in the Scriptures, that I cannot take any personal credit for believing in Jesus Christ. I cannot say, "I am better than Charley Brown because I believed in Jesus, but he did not." Now, I am better off than Charley Brown, as I will spend eternity with God (and he won't); but I am still a sinner separated from God by my sins, my sin nature and Adam's original sin (which sin is imputed to me). My salvation depends completely upon Jesus. Take Jesus out of the picture and I have no real or legitimate access to God.

Throughout the Bible, there are numerous Scriptures which speak of man's free will; and man choosing to commit this or that sin; or choosing to resist that temptation. Men are, over and over again, encouraged to believe in Jesus. Now, if someone cannot really believe in Jesus unless irresistibly drawn by God, isn't the call of the gospel almost mocking? Or, if God wills for all men to be saved, and since

Jesus died for the sins of all mankind, why does God not draw all men to Himself? For me, there are too many logical problems with 5-point Calvinism.

Given this discussion, I am forced by reason to believe that God allows every single person the free will to respond to Him (or to resist Him). In our era of the Church Age, God requires believers to take the gospel into the world; but that God has not left out any person who might believe in Him. That is, no matter where or when a person might live, if he would respond positively to the gospel message, then God must provide that message for him—in every single case.

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