

The Sovereignty of God and the Free Will of Man

Have you ever wondered how there can be two truths that seem to contradict each other? We find this to be so in the Bible. One thing some people have a hard time balancing is the Sovereignty of God and the free will of man. In Revelation 22:17 it says, “The spirit and the bride say come! Whoever is thirsty, let him come, whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of life!” Also, Romans 10:13 says, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord, will be saved,”

Most Calvinists believe that “everyone” means just the elect. In 1 John 2:2 it says, “He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world!” The whole world means everyone” in the world!

In Psalm 71:16 it says, “For you have been my

hope, O Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth.” That tells us that he is called Sovereign.

We also see in Genesis 1:1 the Sovereignty of God, when it says, “In the Beginning God created the heavens and the earth!” That shows God’s Sovereignty because, he didn’t have to make the earth, but he did!

Then in Mark 14:35-36, when Jesus was in the garden of Gethsemane, he asked the Father if there would be any way for him to not go through the crucifixion. In the end Jesus realized, that was His will. Of love for the Father, Jesus submitted to his will. This is another example of the free will of man and the Sovereignty of God. I believe the Bible teaches both.

When Adam and Eve were in the garden, because God gives free will, he allowed the tree of the

knowledge of good and evil to be there. Their choice was to take the fruit. Calvinist believe God made them eat from the forbidden tree. That would mean that God made them sin. James 1:13 says "When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone."

Also, John 19:10-12 it says, "Why don't you talk to me? Pilate demanded. Don't you realize that I have the power to release you, or crucify you?" Then Jesus said, "You would have no power over me at all unless it was given to you from above." That shows the Sovereignty of God because, Pilate thought he had power over Jesus, but Jesus clearly stated that the only power he had over him was allowed by the Father.

Then in Matthew 23:37 it says," O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the City that kills the prophets and

stones God's messengers! How often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen protects her chicks beneath her wings, but you wouldn't let me!" Calvinists believe in irresistible grace. One verse they like to quote is John 6:44, "No one comes to the father unless the father draws him." They will say that the word "draw" means like drawing water from a well and the "water" can't resist the bucket. But that shows that Jesus is the bucket but his people can clearly resist him, which is free will!

It says in 2 Peter 3:9 "He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent!" God does not want any of his children to go to hell! He wants "ALL" of us to follow him, but it is our choice.

If we look in the Bible, another verse that relates

to the Sovereignty of God, and the free will of man, is Exodus 8:32, it says, “Pharaoh hardened his heart again and refused to let the people go!” That says Pharaoh willfully hardened his heart and that shows his free will. We also see in Exodus 11:10b, “But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart.” The “hardened” in this text is the word “Kabad” in Hebrew, which means to stiffen or make firm. So God stiffened and firmed up his choice in rejecting him.

In some cases we need to agree to disagree. In this case, we should be able to believe both the Sovereignty of God and the free will of man even though we don’t understand it because the Bible teaches both. The western mind set believes that if A is right, B is wrong. We need to have a Hebrew mind set where if A is right B also can be right.

For example, Isaiah 9:6b says, “The Government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called:

Prince of Peace!” Then we see in Matthew 10:34

“Don’t imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! I came not to bring peace, but a sword.”

Now there are two different verses, one is saying that Jesus is the Prince of Peace, then the other is saying that he didn’t come to bring peace but a sword. Even though it seems to contradict, that doesn’t mean that we have to pick A or B. Both are true. I believe the Bible clearly teaches the Sovereignty of God and the free will of man.

If we are going to be true Disciples of Christ, we need to believe the whole council of God: (Acts 20:27). The sad thing is that whenever you follow an “ism” (which is manmade), like Calvinism or Armenianism, you tend to be a “deductive Bible

student” rather than an “inductive Bible student”
(which takes in the whole council of God) from
Genesis to Revelation.

As Charles Spurgeon (a Calvinist) once said, “I
believe in the Sovereignty of God but out of my
many years of ministry I’ve also seen the free will
of man. As a Finite being I cannot reconcile the
two, but an Infinite God can!”