

God's sovereignty and free will

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God's sovereignty: God's sovereignty refers to God's control and decision over everything. God is omniscient and omnipotent, and His plans and purposes will be fulfilled. This is clearly stated in Isaiah 46:9-10: "I am God, and there is no other god; I am God, and there is no one like me! And I have made known from the beginning the things that are at the end, and from old times I have spoken of the things that have not been done, saying, My plan will be established."

Free will: Human free will refers to the freedom that people have when making choices. Matthew 28:19-20 records Jesus' command: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey all that I command you." This shows that people have the freedom to choose to accept or reject the gospel.

The book of life and the addition or subtraction of names

Revelation 20:15 declares, "If anyone's name is not written in the book of life, he is thrown into the lake of fire." This means that only those whose names are written in the book of life can live forever in heaven with God. Philippians 4:3 and Revelation 3:5 further emphasize that once a name is written in the book of life, it is never blotted out.

However, this begs questions about God's sovereignty and free will. If God has predestined whose name will be in the book of life, then what is the point of evangelism and free choice?

God's sovereignty and predestination

2 Peter 3:9 says, "It is not God's desire for one to perish, but for all to repent." This shows that it is God's intention to save all people. However, the idea of predestination states that God has predetermined who will and will not be saved. Isaiah 46:9–10 emphasizes God's sovereignty and shows that God's plan will come to pass.

Solomon's free will

King Solomon was a famous king of ancient Israel who was known for his wisdom. One of his best-known stories has to do with wisdom, when two mothers fought over a child, and he skillfully resolved the dispute. But the Bible records that in his later years, King Solomon sinned and violated God's commandments. It mainly includes the following articles:

Idolatry: Solomon built altars for many Gentile wives to worship their gods, which is a violation of the Ten Commandments, "There shall be no other gods."

Fornication: He married many wives and concubines, which went beyond the monogamy established by God.

Unfaithfulness to God: He followed his wives to worship other gods, which was a direct violation of the commandment to "worship the Lord God only."

Because of these transgressions, God warned him that he would divide his nation, which was fulfilled during the reign of his son Rehoboam.

David's free will

King David is one of the most famous kings in Israel's history, and his story is detailed in the Bible. David broke some of the commandments of the Ten Commandments, and here are the main ones:

Adultery: David committed adultery with Bathsheba. This is a violation of the commandment "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Murder: To cover up his crimes with Bathsheba, David arranged for Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, to be killed on the battlefield, in violation of the commandment "Thou shalt not kill."

Greed: David had a covetousness toward Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, in violation of the commandment "Thou shalt not covet."

God's sovereignty and man's free will

God's sovereignty: God is sovereign, His plan is beyond human comprehension, and everything is under His control. Human decisions, actions, and even the course of history are all part of God's plan.

Man's free will: Man's freedom to choose within the limits set by God, and this freedom is limited, but it is real. Free will gives a person the ability to take responsibility for their actions.

The challenge of free will

If everything is under God's control and predestination, then does human free will really exist? God's love for Israel's choices (Deuteronomy 7:7–8) and man's decisions (Proverbs 16:33) both demonstrate God's sovereignty. However, there are also many examples of people's choices recorded in the Bible:

Moses' Appeal (Deuteronomy 30:19): Moses' call to Israel to choose life shows that man has the ability to choose, but also bears the consequences of his choice.

Joshua's reminder (Joshua 24:15): Joshua encouraged the people to choose to serve Jehovah, indicating the need for people to make their own choices in their faith.

Mary's Choice (Luke 10:42): Jesus praised Mary for choosing the best blessings and illustrating the spiritual priorities that can be chosen.

The harmony of sovereignty and freedom

Freedom within the scope: Just as a fish can swim freely in water, man can only have true freedom under the sovereignty of God. This freedom has boundaries, but it brings security and order.

Freedom and Responsibility: Free will does not mean being unrestrained, but being responsible for one's own choices and actions. Freedom is given meaning under the sovereignty of God.

God's love and justice

God's love is undeserved grace, and He chooses some to be His people, but still treats others with common grace. This is not unfair, but it demonstrates God's sovereignty and His love.

God's sovereignty and man's free will are not contradictory, but mutually reinforcing. Under God's sovereignty, man is given the freedom to choose, and at the same time is responsible for the outcome of his choice. This arrangement demonstrates God's omnipotence and respects human dignity and responsibility.

We pray

Dear Heavenly Father,

We thank You for being God Almighty, sovereign and sovereign over all things in heaven and earth. Your wisdom is beyond measure, and your plan is beyond our comprehension. Lord, we are thankful that You created us in love and gave us free will so that we can choose to love and serve You.

Lord, we confess that the mystery between Your sovereignty and our free will is difficult for our finite minds to fully understand. Help us to accept in faith and be obedient to Your will in our lives. As we face choices, please give us wisdom so that we can choose the path that is in line with Your heart.

Lord, You are a faithful God, and You never force our hearts, but You draw us to You with love. Help us to choose to do righteousness in our freedom, to be merciful, and to walk with You in humility. May every choice we make glorify Your name and bring Your blessings.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, amen.