

## Understanding Free Will

“According as it is written” (Romans 11:8)

**I will freely** sacrifice unto thee: **I will** praise thy name, O LORD; for it is good. (Psalm 54:6)

Thus saith the LORD; Again there shall be heard in this place...  
the voice of them that **shall** bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD...  
(Jeremiah 33:10-11)

...**let** us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually... (Hebrews 13:15)

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The King James Bible is God’s “perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25). As such, God uses legally precise words. For, it is according to his perfect law that we will all be judged: the righteous at the judgment seat of Christ, and the unjust at the great white throne.

In the context of this study, God uses legally precise words such as “will” / “would” (indicating intention or expectation) ... and “shall” / “should” (indicating decree/requirement...or... promise); and he uses each word in its precise place such that, in “comparing spiritual things with spiritual,” his law is perfect ...

He is the Rock, his work is perfect... (Deuteronomy 32:4)

As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried... (2 Samuel 22:31, Psalm 18:30)

The law of the LORD is perfect... (Psalm 19:7)

Notice the statement that the word of the LORD is tried. David “tried” the word of the LORD: he searched the scriptures; he compared spiritual things with spiritual – and found the LORD’s work/way/word/law to be perfect – every word.

The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. (Psalm 12:6)  
Every word of God *is* pure... (Proverbs 30:5)

And since “every word of God is pure,” it would behoove us to pay very careful attention to even small words such as “will” and “shall,” regarding their usage in God’s perfect law. (See Luke 24:46 & Hebrews 2:17 for behoved.)

As an example, consider the 23<sup>rd</sup> psalm:

### Psalm 23

1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:  
for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:  
thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

If I choose to make the LORD to be my shepherd, I have his promise that I shall not want for any good thing.

O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.

... they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing. (Psalm 34:9-10)

The LORD *promises* that goodness and mercy shall to follow us all the days of our lives... if we choose to make the LORD our shepherd: if we choose to fear him; to seek him. (Read Proverbs 1)

And we can will (*choose/purpose*) to dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

But, does God’s word say that we *have* a **free** will to do so?

## Free Will – in God's word

Exodus 25:2 – of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart, ye shall take my offering

Exodus 35:5 – whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it

Leviticus 1:3 – let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will ...

Leviticus 7:16 – if the sacrifice of his offering be a vow, or a voluntary offering ...

Leviticus 22:17-23 – Whatsoever he be of the house of Israel ..., that will offer his oblation for all his vows, and for all his freewill offerings, which they will offer unto the LORD ...;  
Ye shall offer at your own will

2 Chronicles 29:31...And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings;  
and as many as were of a free heart burnt offerings.

Ezra 1:4 – let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts,  
beside the freewill offering for the house of God

Ezra 1:6 – with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things,  
beside all that was willingly offered

Ezra 2:68 – And some of the chief of the fathers ... offered freely for the house of God

Ezra 3:5 – continual burnt offerings ... of every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the LORD

Ezra 7:13 – all they of the people of Israel ..., which are minded of their own freewill

Ezra 7:15 – the king and his counselors have freely offered unto the God of Israel

Ezra 7:16 – the freewill offering of the people, and of the priests, offered willingly for the house of their God

Ezra 8:28 – the silver and the gold are a freewill offering unto the LORD God of your fathers

Psalms 54:6 I **will freely** sacrifice unto thee: I **will** praise thy name, O LORD; for it is good.

Psalms 119:108 – Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD

Psalms 119:115 – I will keep the commandments of my God

Psalms 119:117 – Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.

Ezekiel 46:12 – ...the prince shall prepare a voluntary burnt offering or peace offerings voluntarily unto the LORD...

Freewill offerings: Leviticus 22:18,21; 23:38  
Numbers 15:3; 29:39  
Deuteronomy 12:6,17; 16:10; 23:23  
2 Chronicles 31:14  
Ezra 1:4; 3:5; 7:17; 8:28  
Psalm 119:108

## Other selections

Deuteronomy 18:18-20 – I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

2 Chronicles 15:10-15 – So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. And they offered unto the LORD the same time, of the spoil which they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep. And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; That whosoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. And they swore unto the LORD with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets. And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and the LORD gave them rest round about.

Jeremiah 42:10, 15 – See entire chapter for an example.  
Ezekiel 18:21, 28 – See entire chapter for another example.

Matthew 16:24-25 – Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

Matthew 20:25-28 – But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

James 4:4 – Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Choice (only possible if there is free will to choose – else it is not truly a choice)

Deuteronomy 30:19      therefore choose life  
Joshua 24:15          choose you this day whom ye will serve  
1 Chronicles 21:10-11 choose thee one of them  
Proverbs 1:            they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.  
Proverbs 3:31        Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.  
Isaiah 56:4            thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant;  
Isaiah 65:             Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not.  
Philippians 1:22     yet what I shall choose I wot not.

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Revelation 22:17     And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life **freely**.

Hebrews 3:7-8        ...the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, ... Harden not your hearts...

2 Corinthians 6:2     (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

Romans 10:11-13     For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Jesus of Nazareth      (Acts 2:22)

this Jesus              (Acts 2:32)

the LORD                (Acts 2:34)

that same Jesus        (Acts 2:36)

the name of Jesus Christ      (Acts 2:38)

Will you call upon the name of Jesus Christ “to day”? “To morrow” may be a day too late. “Now” is the accepted time.

“Lord Jesus Christ, please save me from damnation and hell, and give me thy free gift of eternal life. Amen.”

## Proverbs Chapter 1

- 1 ¶ The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;
- 2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;
- 3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;
- 4 To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.
- 5 A wise *man* will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:
- 6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.
- 7 ¶ The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction.
- 8 My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:
- 9 For they shall *be* an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.
- 10 ¶ My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.
- 11 If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause:
- 12 Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit:
- 13 We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil:
- 14 Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse:
- 15 My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:
- 16 For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.
- 17 Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.
- 18 And they lay wait for their *own* blood; they lurk privily for their *own* lives.
- 19 So *are* the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; *which* taketh away the life of the owners thereof.
- 20 ¶ Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:
- 21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, *saying*,
- 22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scornors delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?
- 23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.
- 24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;
- 25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:
- 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;
- 27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.
- 28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:
- 29 For that they hated knowledge, and **did not choose** the fear of the LORD:
- 30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.
- 31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.
- 32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.
- 33 But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

## Jeremiah 42

*(The people dissemble<sup>1</sup> in their hearts)*

- 1 Then all the captains of the forces, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from the least even unto the greatest, came near,
- 2 And said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the LORD thy God, even for all this remnant; (for we are left but a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us:)
- 3 That the LORD thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.
- 4 Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard you; behold, I will pray unto the LORD your God according to your words; and it shall come to pass, that whatsoever thing the LORD shall answer you, I will declare it unto you; I will keep nothing back from you.
- 5 Then they said to Jeremiah, The LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the LORD thy God shall send thee to us.
- 6 Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.
- 7 And it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah.
- 8 Then called he Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces which were with him, and all the people from the least even to the greatest,
- 9 And said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto whom ye sent me to present your supplication before him;
- 10 If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up: for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you.
- 11 Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the LORD: for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand.
- 12 And I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land.
- 13 But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the LORD your God,
- 14 Saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell:
- 15 And now therefore hear the word of the LORD, ye remnant of Judah; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to sojourn there;
- 16 Then it shall come to pass, that the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die.
- 17 So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there; they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them.
- 18 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As mine anger and my fury hath been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so shall my fury be poured forth upon you, when ye shall enter into Egypt: and ye shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; and ye shall see this place no more.
- 19 The LORD hath said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah; Go ye not into Egypt: know certainly that I have admonished you this day.
- 20 For ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the LORD your God, saying, Pray for us unto the LORD our God; and according unto all that the LORD our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do it.
- 21 And now I have this day declared it to you; but ye have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, nor any thing for the which he hath sent me unto you.
- 22 Now therefore know certainly that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go and to sojourn.

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<sup>1</sup> DISSEMBLE – to be hypocritical; to assume a false appearance; to conceal the real fact, motives, intention or sentiments under some pretense. This definition, reported in Noah Webster's 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language, gives the sense of the word as +used here in Jeremiah 42.

## Ezekiel 18

*(All souls are the LORD's: he has no pleasure that the wicked should die)*

1 The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying,

2 What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?

3 As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel.

4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

5 But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right,

6 And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman,

7 And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment;

8 He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man,

9 Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD.

10 If he beget a son that is a robber, a shedder of blood, and that doeth the like to any one of these things,

11 And that doeth not any of those duties, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife,

12 Hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination,

13 Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him.

14 Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like,

15 That hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, hath not defiled his neighbour's wife,

16 Neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment,

17 That hath taken off his hand from the poor, that hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live.

18 As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did that which is not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity.

19 Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live.

20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

21 But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

22 All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.

23 Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

24 But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

25 Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?

26 When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.

27 Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.

28 Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

29 Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

32 For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

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Hebrews 10:38-39 – Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.