

Free Will Leads Us Away from God

by Fred DeRuvo - Study-Grow-Know Ministries

Free will gave humanity the ability to choose. Included with that comes the potential to choose *the wrong path*. This is the way God designed it. When He created Adam and then Eve, He did so with the intent that they should have the opportunity to decide for themselves whether they would deliberately and faithfully follow His commands, or choose their own path.

What our first parents failed to realize, of course, is that free will never places a person in the position of being able to choose to follow *no one*. Free will allows a person to choose one thing or the other; God or Satan.

God made humanity, placed them in the Garden of Eden and gave them one simple rule. It wasn't complicated. It was very clear, in spite of the fact that Eve *added* to God's rule. She told the serpent that neither she nor her husband were to *touch* the forbidden fruit, something God had never said. He said they should not *eat* it.

The free will that brought about the desire to move *away* from God through *disobedience* is the same free will that would have allowed Adam and Eve to *remain* in the Garden through *obedience*. It seems then that there is a problem with free will, *not* with God.

It is funny if not ironic when people blame God for the existence of hell. The question constantly asked is: how could a loving God send people to hell? How could a loving God allow sin, death, pain, suffering, or any other negative into the world? He allowed it by virtue of the fact that He created human beings with the capacity to *choose*. He did not create automatons. He created living, breathing, thinking human beings who were given the ability to decide for themselves whom they would follow; God or Satan.

So when both Adam and Eve fell, they literally invited sin into the world. Everything changed. From that point onward, sin, sickness, death, greed, jealousy, murder, hatred, lying, stealing, raping, and everything else that is opposed to God came into being. Since mankind made a legally binding decision to do what they wanted to do and disobeyed God, how can God be assessed blame for anything that happened *after* that fact?

These people are saying that God should have stepped in and stopped Adam and Eve from making the terrible decision they made, yet these same individuals would say that free will should be allowed – but only for the good things apparently. They ask why there is so much evil in the world. How could God allow it? He allows it because humanity invited it by believing Satan's lie.

It *will* come to the end though. All of it will come to its final conclusion and through it all God will be seen as holy, sinless, perfect, loving, glorified, and much more. Nothing will remain that does not glorify God. Everything will give glory to Him, the Creator of all things. Every knee will bow.

Any creature that has the ability to choose seems to want to choose the path that goes *away from* and *against* God. Paul seems to hint at this when he refers to the *elect angels of God* in one of his letters to Timothy (cf. 1 Timothy 5:21). It would appear then that there are some angels who were specifically made by God to *remain* for all time and eternity as completely righteous, able only to do God's perfect will, 100% of the time. Other angels were created and given the ability to rebel against God, and this they did. These of course became the fallen angels of the Bible.

It is certainly interesting to consider the fact that angels who existed *without* sin in God's holy presence would one day opt to break away from Him *through* sin. In fact, it seems almost inconceivable. How could that happen, we wonder? How is that remotely possible? Yet it will happen again with multitudes of people at the end of the one thousand year reign of Jesus on this earth, according the closing chapters of the book of Revelation. Satan, who will have spent those same one thousand years locked away in the pit, will upon his release manage to persuade multitudes of people to turn away from Jesus and follow Satan. We learn this in Revelation 20:7-8, which tells us, "*And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*"

In spite of the fact that these people lived under the fully righteous rule of Jesus for up to ten centuries, in the end a multitude of people so large that the number was like the sand of the sea will gather *with* Satan in one last coup attempt! How can that be? That can't be right, can it? Yet there it is in Scripture, written ahead of time so that when it happens it will simply be one more proof that the Bible is true and God is holy, righteous, and just.

Is it that much different from the situation surrounding Adam and Eve, who lived in *perfection* and also *without* sin, yet one day opted to follow their own desires, rejecting God? The pattern seems to be that those creatures given the ability to choose unilaterally use it at some point to snub God and, in rebellion to Him, simply walk away.

What could Satan have possibly said to the angels that would have caused them to think that following *him* was better than remaining with God? How could Adam and Eve have possibly been motivated to walk away from God, given the circumstances in which they lived prior to the fall?

Is free will so strong that it will bring down even the strongest individual? It would seem so, wouldn't it? Free will – such as it is – seems to want to always and only profit *self*. The only individual who has ever managed to remain free of the downward pull of free will is Jesus Himself. Thank God for that, because without His perseverance in remaining true to God the Father, we would not have ever had the way back to God opened to us again through the only salvation that is available to humanity.

The desire to be something we are not seems to be part of the package that we call free will. Satan had everything he could have ever hoped to have. The highest created being, who likely led the heavenly choir, was robed in majesty and had responsibility and authority above all others except God Himself. Yet this individual eventually chafed at being simply *created* and having to do the dictates of Another. He somehow convinced one-third of the angelic host to follow him in rebellion. They too, it seems, recoiled at the idea that they were created, and as such, were beholden to a Being who far exceeded their abilities. They apparently believed that by following Satan, they would be able to come out from under God's rule.

Both Adam and Eve, although living peaceful lives, with nothing to fear from God's Creation, soon succumbed to the belief that in spite of the fact that they were also created beings, they too could distance themselves from their Creator and see and call themselves *gods*.

If individuals who were without sin could give into the temptation to see themselves as more than they were, how much more difficult is it for us – born into this world as *fallen* people with activated sinful natures – to remain free from the dictates that our free will creates? There seems little chance of avoiding the selfish demands of our free will. In the end, it does not seem that we are actually *free*, does it?

Satan experienced free will. He fell. Some of the angels enjoyed it. They fell. Adam and Eve lived by it. They fell. We are born with it, *already* fallen. Free will does not appear to be a good thing for created beings. Is that one of the things that God is showing the universe?

Certainly those who arrive in heaven after death will have the sin nature removed and with it, the free will. At that point, the only desires left will be to glorify God in every possible way for all of eternity. Never again will people have the thought or desire to do something that is *against* God. Never will anyone seek his or her own welfare, but will instead consider only what is best for God and others. It is something that is nearly impossible to envision now.

Think of the millions and millions of people in this world who live *now*. Then think of the trillions and trillions of people who have lived since Adam and Eve. All of these people

were born with an activated sin nature that constantly urges our free will (corrupt as it is) to act *against* God and *for* ourselves.

All of us have chafed under the burden of that activated sin nature and free will that leans toward self and away from God. Even if our free will was as *pure* as Adam's and Eve's, it seems clear enough that we also would fall. Paul says as much in Romans (cf. 3:23; 5:12). In Adam's place, we would have done the exact same thing that he did.

Is the desire to be *god* so strong that we are not willing to share that deity with anyone else, much less the One who created us in the first place? Is it that, or is it the fact that our free will is such that it will ultimately not allow us to remain "shackled" to anyone for any length of time?

Of course the problem with free will and our sin nature is that we become completely blind to what is true and right. We are still accountable even though blind. Paul also speaks of this in Romans (cf. Romans 5).

We will take this subject up next time as we delve deeper into the lies of the New Age, ascended masters, aliens and all the rest. Join us then!

Until we meet again, may the Lord open your eyes to show you how blessed you are in Him!