

Through The Bible  
November 17, 2004  
Session #44

Two basic positions we'll look at:

Predestination (closed view of  
God)...looked at last time.  
Free Will (open view of God)

### Free Will

It is seen that a fundamental characteristic of human beings that they are capable of making decisions. It's part of the image of God we were created in

See Genesis 1:26

### Free Will

What does it mean to be created in God's image?

- We have a desire for relationship.
- We are created with privilege and responsibility of making decisions.

### Free Will

Do we always make the right decisions?

Our finite nature contrasted with God's infinite nature distinctly separates us from God.

Bottom line: we make bad choices sometimes...often in fact.

### Free Will

How does this position apply to salvation?

Our bad choices leads to sin.

We're in need of salvation from our sin.

### Arminian view in response to TULIP

Total depravity – we cannot save ourselves

Conditional election – our salvation is based on our response to God's offer of grace. God doesn't plan who will accept and who will reject the offer of salvation.

Unlimited atonement – salvation and the atonement Jesus provides is available to all.

### Arminian view in response to TULIP

Prevenient or resistible grace – restores the possibility of faith that TULIP's irresistible grace takes away.

Conditional perseverance – God is faithful but we are free to choose whether or not we'll be faithful.

### More Aspects to Open View of God.

A more open view puts forth the idea that God experiences the world and the world's events in a different way.

### God experiences the world in a different way.

God responds to events as they happen rather than dictating what will happen.

God's response is predictable because God knows how He will respond, but chooses not to know exactly what will happen.

### God experiences the world in a different way.

God's character and existence are not affected even though God responds as events unfold. See Psalm 90:2.

See also Scripture references about God's personal qualities: faithfulness (1st Corinthians 1:9), righteous (Psalm 11:7), justice (Zephaniah 3:5), and mercy (Exodus 34:6-7).

### God chooses not to know what will exactly happen, but God's response is consistently Godly.

### God's response is consistent because:

God's knowledge of the past and present is complete.  
There are no forgotten details as far as God is concerned.  
Because God has not forgotten details, how God will respond is quite predictable.  
Sometimes called, "a perfect anticipation of God's reaction."

### What about the problem of evil?

If God has absolute foreknowledge, then is God would be responsible for evil?  
Some would argue yes because: (a) God went ahead with creation knowing fully that evil would enter the universe; and (b) evil is simply the price of a universe where beings are genuinely free.

### Free Will position on Evil

The free will position says that evil did not originate with God, but with decisions made by created beings. By misusing freedom, people rebelled against God's authority.

### Free Will position on Evil

If God creates human beings with only the capability of disobeying (free will position) instead of the prescription to disobey (predestination position), then isn't the relationship between God and humanity much more genuine and valuable?

### Free Will position on Evil

Illustration: on Valentine's Day, it is normal and expected that spouses send cards, flowers, etc. Suppose a spouse does the expected, but also sends cards, flowers, etc. periodically throughout the year? Wouldn't these 'surprise' and 'unexpected' responses be much more treasured than an 'expected' gift on Valentine's Day?

### Discipling and Free Will

Matthew 28:19-20 – Jesus said to go and make disciples. Doesn't this fit into the open view better than the closed view of God?

## Open View, Arminian View

Is this consistent with your theology? Does this make the most sense to you?

What parts don't make sense?