

Doctrine of Free Will

Are Men Mere Puppets on a String?

1. The Bible teaches there is a “*chosen*” people.
 - *1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*
2. A question arises: “Are men puppets on a string because they are chosen?”
3. In response, the initial point to be made is that any view of God which creates hostility and anger and unworthy concepts of Him must be arrested (Romans 9).
4. Next, our view of God and man and salvation must be rooted in reality. Here is biblical reality.
 - ❖ God is sovereign and will never surrender His position. God is making a lot of decisions on behalf of others such as sex, time of birth, place, etc.
 - ❖ Man is sinful and cannot alter that fact.
 - ❖ Man’s will is in bondage and needs to be freed. Man can only act according to his nature (Ephesians 2).
 - ❖ If man is going to be saved it must be on the basis of grace.
 - ❖ All people are enslaved (a puppet) to someone—either the world, the flesh, the devil or God. *Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.*
 - ❖ True freedom is to move within the sphere of life for which one has been created.
 - ❖ There is divine authority but there is also human responsibility.
5. Another question arises. “*Are men chosen in different ways in different dispensations?*”
6. Dispensationalism teaches that individuals were saved in the Old Testament in a different way than individuals are saved today. Whatever that basis of faith might have been it did not include Jesus Christ as the object of saving faith.

After reviewing select New Testament passages (Acts 17:30; Romans 3:25; John 1:21; John 7:40; 1 Peter 1:10-11), Charles Ryrie writes a conclusion.

“In examining salvation under the Mosaic Law the principle question is simply, How much of what God was going to do in the future did the Old Testament believer comprehend? According to both Old and New Testament revelation it is impossible to say that he saw the same promise, the same Savior as we do today.” Ryrie removes Christ as the object of faith for Old Testament believers.

7. In contrast, Covenant Theology argues that Christ has always been the object of saving faith for all that will be saved from Adam to the last soul converted.
8. Concerning what the Old Testament saints under the Law understood about Christ, John Owen, the great Puritan, writes:

“Christ was ‘all in all’ to them, as he is to us. Take Christ and his offices out of the Old Testament ministry and they become of no value or significance.”

Consider the evidence.

- Christ held men accountable for their rejection of Him even though all they had were the OT Scriptures. *Luke 24:25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: 26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? 27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*
 - Christ taught that Abraham rejoiced to see His day. *John 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.*
 - Jesus rebuked the Jewish leaders for their rejection of Him based upon the Old Testament scriptures. *John 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*
 - Paul states in 2 Timothy 3:15 that Christ was the object of salvation for those who were made wise unto salvation. *2 Tim. 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*
9. A third question is set forth. *“Who are those chosen by God?”*
 10. The honest biblical answer is, *“Not many.”* God does not choose many for salvation.
 - *Matthew 22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen.*

11. However, those who have been chosen by God are called, “*the elect*”.

- *Mark 13:20 And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.*

12. Christ is the one who selects the elect, which is why He knows who is not among the elect.

- *John 6:70 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?*
- *John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*
- *John 15:19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

13. Saul of Tarsus came to faith because the Lord chose him unto salvation.

- *Acts 9:15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:*
- *Acts 22:14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.*

14. Like Saul of Tarsus, Rufus was chosen in the Lord.

- *Romans 16:13 Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.*

15. The divine selection was made before the foundation of the world.

- *Ephesians 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

Special Note.

The elect are those who have been chosen to salvation, sanctification, *and* to service.

- *2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:*

16. It is God who chooses who will be saved, not men.

- *1 Peter 2:3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. [4] To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,*

17. The purpose of the divine undertaking is to bring glory to Christ.

- *1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

18. Those who are chosen will be with Christ for ever and ever to serve with Him and to help defeat His enemies.

- *Revelation 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*