

## Freedom Versus Choice

### Commentary for July 17, 2010 — The Difference Is Important

I want to give additional information about freedom versus choice as discussed in the Bible. The Holy Scriptures use the concept of freedom as the direct opposite of the concept of bondage, whether physical bondage such as slavery, or emotional or spiritual bondage. One is either in bondage or free. "Choice" takes place with every thought and action you take. You make choices even under bondage (as we are all under bondage to sin), even when those choices are made under great compulsion. Choice is not the same as freedom.

"Freedom" in Western and particularly in English usage has many meanings that sometimes get mixed together. Freedom can mean (1) free from restraints; (2) liberty from slavery, detention, or oppression; (3) political independence or immunity from authority; (4) exemption from unpleasant conditions; (5) capacity to exercise choice or free will; (6) ease of movement; (7) frankness or boldness; and finally (8) license, usually referring to deviation from normal rules and practices (*American Heritage Dictionary*, 1994).

In the Bible "freedom" is the opposite of bondage or restraint and has no reference to the theological concept of free will. Choice is the act of selection or having the power to choose between alternative options.

As Dr. Martin's presentation "[Free Will and Predestination](#)" makes clear, neither you nor I have any free will with regard to our salvation. Our salvation is assured because you were placed **"in Christ"** before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4–7). We not only lack freedom in regard to our salvation but we also do not have any choice in regard to our ultimate salvation. You will be saved — ultimately — even if you reject that salvation at present, as most of the world rejects it. Surprisingly, it is God Himself who in His wisdom and grace does not permit most people of the world to know that they are saved (Matthew 22:14).

Those who responded to the Old Covenant, later the New Covenant, or still later the Mystery messages, those who became believers, all of them will be in the resurrection of **"those who are Christ's at His coming"** (1 Corinthians 15:23). The rest of mankind will learn and will respond to God's Gospel only after their physical resurrection from the dead in the white throne judgment (Revelation 20:11–13). Ultimately, death will be abolished and God the Father will be **"all in all"** (1 Corinthians 15:24–28).<sup>1</sup>

The Gospel that most churches present is woefully inadequate. They present the Gospel as having little to do with Christ as Messiah and Savior, although the term "savior" is often used. They believe that Christ "offers" salvation and each person must respond to that offer in order to be saved. That is salvation by works and it is wrong. A proper Gospel message does not tell you how to get saved, it proclaims that you are saved already.

### Freedom

Only if you become disciples or servants of Christ will you begin to learn and know the truths about God, His creation, His purpose in creation, and the truths about your salvation. That learning is arduous and difficult, but mostly because we resist (Jesus says His yoke is easy and His burden light, Matthew 11:27–30). Furthermore, we can be assured that the very truth you are learning will make you free. You will not be "free" before then. You cannot begin to have

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1. See Dr. Martin's article "[The Time Periods for the Resurrections](#)" and my article "[Your Resurrection](#)."

any freedom until that time. The Son of God shall make you free — free indeed (John 8:31–36). In other words, Jesus said that you have freedom only in Him.

## Choice

Freedom is not choice and choice is not necessarily freedom. You always have choices in life, even when you are not free. A slave can choose to die rather than obey his or her master. In ancient times the master had the right to kill the slave. After all a slave was the master's property and he could do as he pleased with his property, even to destroy it. Biblical rules of slavery were by far more "humane" than slavery in contemporary societies.

You are a slave to sin, or at least you were before you knew Christ. Sin is your master (John 8:34), until you are saved. Yet you always have a choice to sin or not sin no matter what your level of servitude. Potentially you always can choose to do righteousness, though your occasional righteous acts never make you righteous. Sin holds you in bondage through your flesh. In reality you are not free to act with the righteousness God requires without Christ's help.

**"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve ["still slaving" in Greek] sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin."**

• *Romans 6:6–7*

Paul reminds us: **"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him"** (Romans 6:8). Death will free you from sin, but death cannot provide righteousness. Read Romans 6:12–14. That which you serve, reigns and rules over you. Christ changes that dire situation: **"For sin shall not have dominion over you"** (Romans 6:14).

In every instance of sin, or unrighteousness, or evil that each of us commit ... we make a choice. We make a choice even if there are circumstances that lead or compel us to choose to do sinful, unrighteous, or evil thoughts, words and deeds:

**"Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants [slaves] to obey, his servants [slaves] you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that you were the servants [slaves] of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, you became the servants [slaves] of righteousness."**

**I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as you have yielded your members servants [slaves] to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants [slaves] to righteousness unto holiness. For when you were the servants [slaves] of sin, you were free from righteousness."**

• *Romans 6:16–20*

Paul is talking about choices, not some imaginary "free will" dreamed up by theologians. Note this important concept: as a slave to sin you were free. That is certain. Unfortunately, **"you were free from righteousness"** (Romans 6:20). That is nothing to be proud of. Every sin you commit, you choose to commit it. You are not forced. You are not compelled. The devil does not make you do it. Yes, you are a slave of sin and you may be seduced as Eve was by the serpent, but she chose to eat that forbidden fruit.

God's Holy Spirit gives you the freedom to make proper choices **"in Christ."** Slowly (and perhaps even unrecognizably to you or others, but in ways recognizable to God) your character is being molded and changed so that you become **"servants to righteousness."** You will be free and able to make proper choices. God is in control. You are loved.

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