

# Kingdom News

Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever... (Matt. 6:13)

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## The Sovereignty of God and/or the Will of Man

*Either or Both?*

The Lord woke me up one morning with a most amazing revelation. Okay ... okay it was amazing to me. He had shown it to me previously; it was right before my very eyes; He had even spoken it into conversations that I've had. But I did not make the connection.

Stated as a proposition: How can man have "free" will and God be Sovereign? Aren't these two mutually exclusive?

There are at least two *Schools of Thought* (SOT) on this topic.

One *School of Thought* (we'll call this SOT1) believes that the sovereignty of God determines everything; and the will of man doesn't really account for much; outside of what to eat for breakfast; what color socks to wear.

Another *School of Thought* (we'll call this SOT2) believes that the independent will of man determines outcomes. We define our destiny; we make it happen.

Absent revelation on the subject, these two positions seem to have perspectives that are diametrically opposed. From these divergent *Schools of Thought*, we get a great deal of other presuppositions and worldviews. These two

*Sovereignty ...*

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## The Leadership Corner *Leadership Living, Inc.*

### Change from the Inside Out

Do you ever wonder how things in your environment could change for the better? For example, would you like to see family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, or others experience positive changes? Surely there are many situations that could stand some improvement. Someone's boss needs to improve her attitude. There is a teenager who needs to learn to make better life choices. Maybe your spouse needs to learn to better manage the household finances. Undoubtedly we could think of hundreds (maybe even thousands) of changes we would like to see take place in the lives of those around us.

But, how can this happen? None of us can control the choices other people make. And, as many have already learned, we can't change other people's behaviors ... or can we? I submit to you that each of us holds the key to helping those in our environments to experience positive changes in their lives.

A mystery? Not really, instead it is a basic principle that is guaranteed to work in many situations.

As Christians, we each have the Holy Spirit living in our hearts. We know that through God's Spirit he leads and guides us (if we obey). What we may not think about is that as we allow the Holy Spirit to change and grow each of us internally it affects our behavior. And, when our behavior changes it causes changes in the behaviors of those around us.

Let's take parenting for an example. We understand the importance of modeling positive behaviors for our children. We know they do what they see us do, not what we say. Parents are in fact guidebooks for their children.

By this same token or principle, we as Christians and therefore leaders, are guidebooks for those in our

environments. And we must understand that many people need our guidance. They watch to see who they can pattern their lives after.

In Romans 8:19 (paraphrased) it says that all of creation is waiting to see God manifested in his people. They want to see God in the flesh. In Psalms 37:37 (paraphrased) scripture instructs people to model their lives after mature, obedient Christians; and, by doing so they will find peace.

Finally, Paul said (in II Corinthians 3:2) that we are epistles (letters or documents) that others read. Imagine that! People *read* us so that they can practice the behaviors they see in us.

So, how do we help bring about positive changes in others? We must allow the Holy Spirit to model these behaviors in us. God changes us internally. Our behaviors change externally. Others see our positive changes. This allows the Holy Spirit to minister to their hearts and cause them to start making positive changes also. That's how it works.

No longer do we need to keep asking God to change this person or that person. Of course, we will always pray for people. And, in addition, we will consciously allow the Holy Spirit to change our hearts and our behaviors in very practical ways so that others can see it and begin to make changes in their lives.

One example is when we see someone lose weight and keep it off. This happened in my life. God taught me how to change my personal habits to create an environment that would support my health goals. I was able to lose sixty-five pounds and I've kept it off for several years.

My family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers saw the changes and began to make similar changes in their lives. I didn't have to preach to them. In this case, I didn't even have to pray for them. They saw the positive changes and followed suit.

I encourage each person to commit to allow the Holy Spirit to change you on the inside. This will bring about positive changes on the outside. And people in your environment will begin to follow the pattern they see in you.

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## ◇ The Servitude of Leadership ◇

*By David L. White*

All scriptures are paraphrased from the King James Bible

Matt 20:26-27 *But whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister; and whosoever shall be chief among you let him be your servant.*

Let us begin this article in question. As Christians, are we really the head and not the tail? Are we really above and not beneath?

It is becoming ever more popular to speak about being the head and not the tail. We have well aroused our emotion with being above and not beneath. We have clapped our hands and said our amen's. We have even danced and shouted in the aisles; but when the sermon is over, when the music stops playing, when we leave the tabernacle what does this mean? Why has the Lord placed anyone in leadership? What are His purposes for this structure within the hierarchy of mankind?

Matt 24:45 *Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord has made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he comes shall find doing so.*

I challenge you...that the reason any person whatsoever has been put in a place of leadership is to lift up those who are not so placed. The reason you have been left with the food is to feed those who have been left without. And as His Word portrays above: blessed are you O servant who is faithful and wise...so as to feed those without food, clothe those without clothes, and house those without home.

If resources of any kind have been bestowed upon you it is so that you supply those without. This is what it means to be the head.

I submit that a look at the human body will further illuminate this for us. For how else is the body nourished; but by the mouth? How else is the plan laid; but in the brain? How else does the body see;

but through the eyes? And how else does the body hear; but through the ears. Without the head we see that the body is lost.

**Matt 20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many**

This word *ministered* is diakoneō. This is a Greek word which means to *serve*. The Son of man came to serve. So then if The Head came to minister, if the Lord came to serve; then what else is any other master to do. For what other reason are you placed above, than to reach down and pull your brethren up? Why else are you placed on a lifted podium than to show those below how to bow down before God?

**Pro 4:7 ...with all thy getting get understanding**

This is the bottom line: If our elevated position does not lead us to fall down in servitude; then we have not *understood* our position. If our fortune does not lead to the fortune of others; then our fortune will be counted by God as misfortune when our works are judged. Our Lord Jesus led us by becoming a servant. So then if our leadership is not servitude we have misled. I admonish you, then, to lead by serving, and to serve as a leader.

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### Our Prayer for Readers:

Our prayer for each and every one of you is that God will give you such a genuine and sincere hunger and thirst for righteousness; the likes of which you have not seen or conceived before.

Amen

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perspectives have given birth to a myriad of divergent systems of belief throughout the ages.

#### ***On the topic of Salvation:***

SOT1 is inclined to conclude that God chooses man; whereas SOT2 is given to the belief that man chooses God; by an act of his free will.

#### ***On the topic of Predestination:***

SOT1 believes that man’s destiny is set before he is born; that God has already determined it; whereas SOT2 is more inclined to believe that man determines his own destiny.

The list could go on, but for the sake of brevity this should suffice.

Now, oddly enough there is scriptural support for both *Schools of Thought*. There are ways of interpreting scripture that would seem to agree or concur with both perspectives; as divergent as they may seem. This is a very key and pivotal point; because there are some who refute the authenticity and authority of the Bible (as the inspired Word of God), for these very reasons. An undiscerning eye would see the presence of two seemingly, mutually exclusive perspectives as “contradictions.”

I will tell you from personal experience there are absolutely no contradictions in Divine Truth, none. Jesus Christ is Himself, TRUTH. The truths of the Bible are simply an expression of His Person. The scriptures teach us that there is no division in Him. Begin your beliefs here. Then ask God for revelation and clarification; as you move forward from this starting point. I’m sure that what you’ll find is that what seems to be a contradiction is actually our inability to reconcile the differences within our own understanding. As stated in (Rom. 3:4 KJV reference) let God be true and every man (contrary opinion) be a liar.

#### ***Scriptural support for School of Thought #1 (SOT1)***

1. No man can come to Me [*Jesus*] unless the Father draws him ... (John 6:44, 65 KJV reference)
2. It is God who works in you both to will and to do according to His good pleasure ... (Phill. 2:13 KJV reference)
3. Whom God did foreknow, He also did predestinate ... (Rom. 8:29 KJV reference)

For SOT1, this line of thinking follows:

- ◆ That man does not have, within the jurisdiction of his will, the ability to choose God or to choose in favor of God. We are naturally unable, or incapable.
- ◆ God chose a portion of humanity to be saved.

The rest He did not choose; therefore they will not be saved. Because, in His sovereignty, He didn't choose them.

- ◆ Sidebar: This interpretation can and has gendered great strife and distrust in the hearts of many. Particularly our brothers and sisters who are atheists. Atheists and others, by this, perceive God to be duplicitous and irrational in His sovereignty. How can He both elect certain ones to salvation and not elect others and still hold the “un-elect” responsible for their sin? Many of them believe it to be unrighteous of God to do something like this. And to most any rational mine, the concept (understood as such) is difficult, at best; and impossible “at worst” to embrace. It provokes confusion and does not encourage sublime trust in such a God.

### Scriptural support for School of Thought #2 (SOT2)

1. For God so loved the world that whosoever will (or chooses) may come... (John 3:16 KJV paraphrased)
2. Work out your own soul's salvation ... ( Phil. 2:12 KJV reference)

For SOT2, this line of thinking follows:

- ◆ That man does in fact have it within the control of his will to choose God and to choose in favor of God.
- ◆ We are fully responsible for our choices and actions:
  - Sidebar: Of course, there is seeming opposition to this way of thinking, too. Our own personal experience leads us to say like Paul “when I would do go, evil is always present with me. While I am aware that I can *choose* to do good; it is actually difficult to be consistent in *doing* it. (Rom. 7:18-21 KJV adapted)

Perhaps one may inquire; if there is scriptural support for both perspectives, don't these opposite polarities constitute contradictions? Please do not go away thinking that “the Bible is full of contradictions; therefore it cannot be completely trusted.” These “challenges” might serve to induce more intense research and inquiry into a matter.

So which School of Thought is correct? How, pray tell, do we reconcile these seemingly disparate and divergent paths?

For clarity I'll restate the two “ideas” this way:

- 1) God chooses and so it is ... potentially resulting in the belief that what we see in our world is the result of the sovereignty of God.
- 2) Man chooses and so it is ... potentially resulting in the belief that what we see in our world is the result of man's choices, decisions and actions.

Here we have two *Schools of Thought*; both seeming to have scriptural support. If they are *not* contradictory how, then, are they to be resolved?

On the one hand, there is the sovereignty of God; and on the other the will of man.

There is a sense in which both of these perspectives are germane to the whole of this truth. Unfortunately, it is often the case that these two *Schools of Thought* hold their opinions as mutually exclusive to each other. As if a thing is either purely the result of the Sovereignty of God or purely of the will of man. The scriptures taken as a complete expression of Jesus Christ reveal something different. There is a communion (a marriage even) of these two realities: God's Sovereignty and man's free will.

In Genesis (2:18) when God said “it is not good that man should be alone.” He was revealing an eternal truth!!! But He didn't stop there, His next statement also revealed a complementary truth. He said, “I will make him (humanity) a help meet for him. We often relegate this statement to the concept of marriage (between a man and a woman); and this is an appropriate expression. However the breadth of this truth is considerably farther reaching than just the union of the humanity to humanity. It is an expression of the communion of Divinity with Humanity.

Bless God for how the Gospel writer Mark captured this truth so succinctly (Mark 9:23-24 KJV). A father brought his son, possessed with a dumb spirit to Jesus. The father said, “Jesus if you can do anything, have compassion on us, help us.” Jesus said, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believes.” Listen to the father's response. This is the marriage of these two truths.

The father said in tears. “Lord, I believe. Help, Thou, my unbelief.”

When I read this father's plea; I understand him to be saying:

- 1) Lord, as much as it is possible for me to believe, I do. But there is a part of me that is fearful and

- uncertain. Here is where I need help. Or ...
- 2) I am “willing” to believe, Lord, please help me to be “able” to believe. Or ...
  - 3) I believe as much as I understand. But there is a place in me where I lack understanding therefore my faith may be compromised, Lord help me, here. Or ...
  - 4) Etc.

See the wisdom of God in the father’s statement; it is the revelation of the “I/You” relationship between Humanity and Divinity. Our Father is a God of relationship, communion and intimacy. He has never intended for man to be alone ... in anything ... ever.

Man is capable of choosing God; and choosing in favor of the things of God. However, man is not *alone* capable of choosing God. Man is as personally and as naturally capable of choosing God (et al); as he is of choosing anything else. However, he must choose within the sovereign framework of the provision of God.

- God’s Sovereignty is *infinite and absolute*; as with all of His other characteristics. And as such God predestines.
- Man’s free will is *finite and circumscribed*; as with all of His other characteristics. And as such man chooses.

You’ll find this truth to be everywhere evident.

One example from scripture is Deut. 30:19 (KJV paraphrased) where God tells Israel that *He has set* before them life and death; blessing and cursing. He then admonishes *them to choose* life .... God established the parameters of life and death. Within (and only *within*) those parameters we may choose. While we are free to choose within those parameters; we are however, not free to redefine the parameters. The parameters are left to the Sovereignty of God.

Now one example from politics: The Presidential voting process: Someone(s) choose who the electoral candidates will be. You, the voter, is then free to select from this predefined list of candidates. You are also *free* to forego choosing. But whichever option you prefer, you’ll do it within the framework of the options established.

We have the Divine Sovereignty of God and the free will of man. Both roles are held in tension the one with the other. Within God’s relationship with mankind these are *sin quo non* to each other. They are “that without which” there is no communion; no relationship.

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## Boot Camp (New)

I’d like to share with you a series of meditations that the Lord gave to us; as He is working to transform us into the image of His Son. (Rom. 8:29 ref) If you feel so inclined you are welcomed to join us. I cannot fully express to you how it has already begun to change my life, personally. I have also seen it change the lives of some of those around me.

**Warning:** there are sharp edges, please handle with care.

### PROMISE

Father, if we confess our sins, You are Faithful and Just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. This is Your promise to your children.  
(1 John 1:9)

### MY CONFESSION

Father, we confess that our heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. We cannot know the depths of its depravity. Who can know it?  
(Jer. 17:9) Father, You have judged righteously. How weak is our heart, seeing the things that we do and we allow. They are even the works of an idolater.  
(Ezek. 16:30)

### FATHER’S ADMONITION

Father, You require that we cast away from us all our transgressions, that we have transgressed; that we repent, and turn ourselves from all of our transgressions; so that iniquity will not be our ruin. You have directed us, Father, to make for ourselves a new heart and a new spirit.  
(Ezek. 18:30-31)

### OUR PRAYER

Father, we receive Your command to make for ourselves a new heart and new spirit. But we cannot do this without You. We beseech You, please create in us a clean heart; and renew a right spirit within us. Purge us with hyssop, and we will be clean: wash us, and we will be whiter than snow. Father, You desire truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden parts You will make us to know wisdom. You will cause us to have intimate knowledge of Your wisdom. Then will we teach transgressors Your ways; and sinners will be converted to You.  
(Ps. 51:6-13~)

### FATHER’S RESPONSE/ANSWER

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope the LORD is. He shall be like a tree planted by the waters that spreads out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat comes, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought (spiritual or economic famine), neither shall cease from yielding fruit.(Jer. 17:7-8)

### OUR REJOICING

Father, You have heard our supplication; You will receive our prayer. You have humbled us and You do hear the desire of the humble. You will prepare our heart, and cause my ears to hear You. (Ps. 6:9; 10:17) ◇ ✎ ◇



## A Journey to Intimacy

### The Journey Continues – My Biography

(Received May 15, 2009 AM)

One sometimes contemplates writing his memoirs or an autobiography even; an opportunity to memorialize our journey here on this earth.

During one of my contemplative periods not long ago, I noticed that someone had already written my biography.

My skeletons aren't in the closet any more... they are written across the pages of the most widely distributed book in the world. Talk about airing one's dirty laundry.

It reads ...

Oh, wretched man, that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? For I know that in my flesh dwells no good thing. I know the law; that it requires that I love the Lord with my all and my neighbor as my self. And I sincerely intend to do just that. Certainly the ability to will (intend) to obey is within the blush of my prerogative. But ascertaining "how" to do what I intend, is where I run afoul. How do I love the Lord with all my heart? For the things I do are against my better judgment. And what I know I ought to do, I don't. I "love" what I "ought to do;" I "hate" what I actually do.  
(Rom. 7:24)

I acknowledge that the commandments of God are righteous. But *I* am not. For I find in me a law (in my appetites & passions) that opposes the law of God, to which my mind consents. Somehow I manage to lose the battle to the law of my passions & appetites.

Again I ask, "Who shall deliver this wretched man that I am?" Who!?! .... Who's that? ... A man? How will a man deliver me?

He was wounded for my transgressions. He was bruised for my iniquities. The chastisement of my peace was upon Him and by His stripes I've been made free ... I've been made whole.

But WHO is this man?

Him of whom it was prophesied; "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse ... Him of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth." (Isa. 11:1)

He cries out, "Come to Me, all of you who labor in the strength of your own will to be free from the law in your members (appetites & passions). You who are burdened by your failures to do right, come to Me, and I will give you rest.  
(Matt. 11:28 KJV)

I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. I'm beginning to understand. I see that when I submit to the truth of God, that I believe in my heart; I serve God. But when I submit or acquiesce to my passions and appetites I serve sin and self. I'm beginning to see it now. (Rom. 7:25)

Lord, I acknowledge my sin to You and my iniquity have I not hid. I determined in my heart and I confessed my transgressions to the Lord. And Lord, You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. (Ps. 51:3)

I would probably have written this myself, but I was too arrogant and self-deceived. <KJV>



### My Personal Creed as a Child of God

- JoAnn White

Who we are as Christians, determines what we do.

*Example:* I am created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26); therefore I am committed to love the Lord with all of my heart, soul, mind and strength and my neighbor as my self (Luke 10:27). Now that I know who (and whose) I am; I no longer engage in contrary actions and attitudes of the heart. For this same reason I am also committed to refraining from lying, stealing, committing adultery, coveting, engaging in idolatry, dishonoring my parents, etc. (Deut 5:16-21) I am committed to meekness, pureness of heart, the giving of mercy (Matt. 5).

(Inspired by lecture by Ravi Zacharias entitled: *Leadership Seminar Workshop- Session 1*)

