

The Word Of Faith (pt 1)
By Martin Cisneros

Someone kept throwing in my face that free will wasn't Scriptural and wasn't to be found in the whole of the Bible, and they tend to use the KJV as a Universalist. So, I picked up my Strong's Concordance yesterday morning and looked up Sovereign and Sovereignty and like I figured, it's not to be found in the whole of the KJV. Not even a word specifically implying it in either the Hebrew or Greek, according to Strong's. (I read really fast, but count slowly sometimes.)

But with Sovereignty not being found in Strong's in a translation that was produced when belief in God's Sovereignty was at it's zenith (although I realize that there have been countless revisions to the KJV), I decided to see if the Bible said anything about freewill, simply from the standpoint of the Concordance. And here's what I found. In the KJV these terms are used and here's how many times they're used:

Strong's Concordance says that the KJV uses the word "free" 58 times, freewill 17 times, freed 2 times, freely 16 times, freewoman 3 times, selfwill is used 1 time, selfwilled is used 2 times, and liberty is used 27 times. I got lazy on counting out the word "will" so I asked Biblegateway.com how many times "will" is used and it counted 'em up as 2908 times, willing is used 54 times, willeth is used 1 time, wilt is 208 times, and would is used 437 times.

Everyone with any Scriptural sense is going to acknowledge that many, many of those uses of the word "Will" are going to be in the sense of the will of God, but I'd be deeply surprised if it wasn't over 500 that refer to the will of man, because of my own Church background where man's will was actually taught from the Scriptures rather than improvised by nice sounding flowery new age-isms like you find in a lot of Churches that don't keep it to the Book. Again, no one who believes in the Universal Restoration has ever asserted that God isn't Sovereign.

It's the unwillingness of some to acknowledge that man has a will that's anything but corrupt where those who believe in free will take issue. Liberty seems to be the KJV word that comes closer to the idea of what people mean that use the term "free will" or "freewill," although free, freely, would, and will would also be [KJV] Scriptural terms for what someone believing in free will is referring to.

God overrides our free will when it's in our best interests or when it's in the best interests of His own glory, or where it relates to a Covenant issue that He's keeping to the thousandth generation, as when He turns the heart of the king/prime minister/president where He wishes. But not much besides.

It's pretty much our own decision and varying degrees of blindness that determines whether or not our socks are matching that we're wearing today. Most of the time, His overriding of someone's will winds up being about His providing hand to someone that's keeping Covenant with Him, or at least on their knees before Him pushing past every demonic obstacle in prayer. What He did with Pharaoh was in the behalf of Israel, what He did with Christ Jesus was about our provisions, etc., etc.

People confuse the Jubilee principle of the Scriptures with the natural laws of the harvest that Jesus described in Mark 4. The years of release and years of Jubilee where God demands the preaching of liberty throughout the land are entirely different from the normal years where the free will of man is where it's generally going to naturally flow towards as to whether or not there's liberty or captivity. There are no Scriptural laws of the harvest (i.e. 2Corinthians 9, Galatians 6, et. al.) without free will.

2Corinthians 8:12 says that this is according to what a man has and not according to what he doesn't have, so the arguments about all of the externals and internals that man seemingly has no control over are irrelevant to the conversation. But at the same time, whenever we reach a fullness of time on certain things, God is going to have every single fruit and every single seed that corresponds with His predetermined will for Him to have.

The idea that the Sovereignty of God only comes up in Scripture in connection to prosperity, or God's providing Hand where something or someone is concerned; some aspect of His plan, and usually involving some segment of His people that He's engineering some element of prosperity in their lives is an idea that won't leave me. I keep thinking of more and more examples of that in the Scriptures. Any Scripture that comes to mind for any Christians with an almost exclusive belief in God's Sovereignty should probably be challenged by them in their meditation time with the questions: "Where's the Prosperity in this aspect of God's Sovereignty? What or who is being prospered as a result of God's Sovereignty in this?"

And that may turn out to be, upon careful further examination, the way to Scripturally judge whether you're talking about an area of God's Sovereignty at work in your life or whether you're simply allowing yourself to be robbed and beaten down by the devil: Is God genuinely using this or that for His glory in a way that can Scripturally be judged and perceived by unbelievers that He's calling to Himself? And in what way is God fully prospering His firstborn people/elect within the context of this eon by this or that?

If you can't Scripturally answer both of those questions in an edifying way, then you're nose to nose with the devil and not with God in the situation and need to rebuke it and cast it out and stand against the situation with the promises of God at absolutely all costs of fasting, prayer, meditation in the Scriptures, and screaming the Word of God if necessary until the Holy Spirit manifests and actually brings glory to Christ Jesus in your deliverance, being provided for, etc.

One of my deepest concerns for weeks and weeks was the apparent fatalism in most Sovereignty teaching in Christian circles and mistakenly submitting to the devil rather than to God [situation by situation] without a Scriptural balance being conveyed in any of the teaching along those lines. But I believe that God is now opening my eyes to the just balance in that and how to Scripturally judge that and the fruit of whatever is going on, as to whether it's a genuine area of God's Sovereignty or a devil that genuinely and literally needs to be cast out.

If it doesn't bring glory to the finished work of Christ, then it is most definitely not an area of God's Sovereignty at work and you need to cast it out even if it takes fasting 40 days and confessing the Word night and day without sleep until you're fully persuaded of His victory over every area of your life in ways that are redemptive and that knit you in a greater way to God's love and provision.

If it's trying to prevent the will of God from coming to pass of your being exalted without measure by the abundance of the revelations, then it's time to believe [for once] that God's grace is sufficient rather than insufficient and rebuke and cast it out because God is fully behind your being exalted by the provisions of Christ as a testimony to a wicked and perverse generation among whom you're to shine as a light in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star arises in their hearts!

If we're not able to say with Apostle Paul, "I've been delivered from all of these afflictions" then we've not yet fully partaken of the grace of God and haven't fully accepted the promises by which St. Peter said that we're made partakers and participants in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that's in the

world through lust. If we're not escaping the curse of this world and are still being defeated by circumstances then it's time to do a reality check on what we really believe was achieved at the Cross because that was for our deliverance and not for our continued shame.

It's the devil that's looking to shame us and bring disappointment to the world when we who know Christ Jesus and His mighty power aren't having a better lot in life than they are. The Scripture talks about those whose glorying is in their shame and whose end is destruction. Everything in the New Testament calls upon us to resist those things that we've been redeemed from by the sufferings of Christ. He bore our sin, so we're to resist it, according to Romans 6. He bore our poverty, according to 2Corinthians 8:9, therefore we're obligated to believe the Gospel and give until we've broken the back of that curse of poverty on our lives and walk into the place that God has for us where we're fully equipped for every good work.

If Christ's work isn't fully being glorified in any of my circumstances and if His salvation isn't being beautified to all of the nations to where they're wanting what I have, then there's a devil on the loose somewhere in my life that needs to be cast out, whether it's in my body, my finances, my area of what I'm doing with my life, whether my mind is fully renewed to the victory side of life in walking hand in hand with Christ Jesus as a King and Priest in life through the abundance of grace and gift of righteousness that I've been a recipient of, etc.

I've had a deepening concern regarding a growing hyper sovereignty perspective, among some Christians, that tries to say that "whatever will be, will be" when 75% of the pages of the New Testament rebuke such an outlook on life and calls upon us to put on the whole armor of God and to bring every thought into subjection to the obedience of Christ Jesus, having in a readiness to avenge all disobedience when our obedience is fulfilled.

Everything He bore for us, we're obligated to resist as partakers in the fellowship of His sufferings, being made comformable unto His death in order to obtain the resurrection from the dead in each of these situations that we face in life. All things are ours. The Scriptures ask "Why do you glory as if you had not received it?" Again, we're not to be glorying in our circumstantial shame, but are to be giving thanks always for the abundance of all things to serve Him joyfully and with gladness of heart. His determined will for our lives is that we become thoroughly equipped for every good work and that we walk out every blessing upon our lives until they're tangible realities in our lives with which we can serve and bless every nation, every family, and every individual in Creation.

If we abide in Him, and His Word abides in us, then the New Testament teaches from cover to cover that we can ask whatever we will and it will be done for us. Let's claim and receive each piece of gold refined in the fire that He has for us, and robes with which to get away from being naked by the circumstances and prior paradigms of our lives. As we've received Christ Jesus our Lord, let's walk in Him (Colossians 2:6-7; 1John 2:6) and meet every single need in the world. That's the only reason that we're here: to inherit a blessing (1Peter 3:10-13) and to be a blessing to everyone (Galatians 3:9,13,14,22,29).

The Word Of Faith (Pt 2)
By Martin Cisneros

The will of God never fluctuates with your fluctuating emotions. The will of God is the anchor for your soul. It'll bring about not only a righteous perspective on your emotions, but it'll bring you righteous emotions if you'll suffer through your own emotions – REFUSING to turn loose of the will of God. When the Lord highlights something in your destiny through either the Scriptures or through the Holy Spirit, then your questions for the Lord should be about "when," but not about "if." Never allow the perfect will of God to get away from you, or from your understanding. Never let go!

The will of God never fluctuates with your fluctuating emotions. The will of God is a sword with which you are supposed to be controlling your emotions, thoughts, and feelings. While some of you will shout about the will of God never fluctuating with your fluctuating emotions when it comes to the Universal Restoration, some of you are deeply shy about the Hosea 2:18 covenant, about abandoning your premillennialism, and about leaving your sinfully adulterous lives behind. Adultery is obviously any choice that is outside of the will of God. And that's not a typo. Any choice outside of the will of God is both adultery and idolatry. Reread the whole books of Psalms, Song of Solomon, Jeremiah, Hosea, and Malachi if you're not quite sure how to put that together Scripturally and intellectually.

Whether the Lord's spoken to you about who you will marry eventually, or whether He's spoken to you about the particular Church that you belong in – or whether He's speaking to you about your diet in relation to the Hosea 2:18 covenant – His position is completely nonnegotiable. You can do something else, about any of the above, but the consequences are Hell. Hell is when your disobedient butt is pinned down by your disobedience and when you've got to stew in the juices of your own self inflicted disobedience until the Lord eventually intervenes at the moment of your repentance. Some people want to talk about the will of God, but to never do the will of God. Jesus spoke of such people in Matthew 23, and uh... it's not pretty.

Some of the very people that are the biggest advocates of the sovereignty of God will probably be amending me at this point, but some of you are supposed to be enormously wealthy. But, because you're scared of death of "Word of Faith" movements, you're living in an area of deliberate disobedience on the pretense of wanting nothing but the will of God, and on the worldly pretense that says that if God ever gave it to you, then you'd be obligated to keep it. The will of God never fluctuates with your fluctuating emotions. If God purposed your disobedience in the Garden of Eden, but still essentially left the disobedient act in the hands of man to commit, then why would you believe that God's purpose for your prosperity would be devoid of your walking the grace out by faith, obedience, generosity, and overflowing thankfulness that you're much more of a partaker of in Christ?

Have you been able to extrapolate nothing from the teachings of Thomas Talbott and other Universalists about your free will being very essentially involved in whether or not you experience the grace of God as kindness or as severity? If you're living a life of severity, then learn the lessons of humility, obedience, generosity, and the type of thanksgiving that brings deliverance as quickly as you're able to. The will of God, once clearly stated, never fluctuates with your fluctuating emotions.

The Lord being a good Parent tends to reveal His plan in the order that He wants for you to walk it out, with the exception of times that He lets you know "do this before this," etc. If He's revealed something and you don't know how to place it within the framework of what you're doing now – while it's easier said than done – make sure that you pursue His plan, even if it ever wound up being at the expense of the rest of your routine. That's not to say that He won't ever reveal something to you and you'll step

out on it, but can only take it so far until other things work themselves out. But to neglect something that the Lord's been clear about until it's convenient is the foolishness of the 5 foolish virgins. You don't make the plan of God fit into your busy schedule. You build your busy schedule around the plan of God.

Though it's [generally] a cheezy fundamentalism, it's still fitting here: His commandments aren't suggestions.

Those of you with a Word of Faith background especially have little excuse for being led by your emotions or by what things appear, as in relation to the will of God concerning the destiny of all of Creation. If the will of God never fluctuates with your fluctuating emotions when it comes to the relational and material necessities of life, then why would you suppose that it would ever fluctuate in relation to what I would know as the Universal Restoration, but which you might sneeringly or flippantly refer to as "Universalism?" 1 Timothy 2 says to pray for all men everywhere. Have you ever believed you received in the behalf of all men when you prayed? (i.e. Mark 11:22-26) If you ever genuinely come to the place of sincere trust in the Word of God in the behalf of all men and of God's plan for each of them, then there will be no more room for fluctuating or implying double election in an altar call, that if someone doesn't come to Christ in your timing that they're necessarily in the plan of God eternally lost. When has your timing ever been how the plan of God worked out? And when have His ways always been your ways?

When are you going to take the Will of God – the whole Will of God – and refuse to ever back away? What part of the Will of God are you leaving in neglect, that you could have at least done more about your part of it than you have thus far? Stop thinking traditionally, in relation to your own traditions of what you're willing to call obedience. What are you doing in relation to the recovery of Israel to God and the Hosea 2:18 plan of God for animals? Per the language of Paul in Romans, what are you doing to make Israel, after the flesh, jealous of your relationship with Messiah and with the manifestations of the Promises of God in your life? What area of bow, sword, and battle are you helping to repress in relation to animals, per the language of the Hosea 2:18 covenant if you're "Body of 'Christ'"?

We Have Free Will
By Martin Cisneros

We have free will. There's no question about that, as the child that was told to sit down who grumbled to himself that he might be sitting on the outside, but he's standing on the inside. What people confuse for a lack of free will is the current level of futility to existence:

...for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. (Romans 7:18)

And then talking about after Lord Jesus was raised from the dead, the Bible says: "For the creation was subjected to futility" (Romans 8:20)

When Lord Jesus had shattered death, He left us with the announcement of His conquest over death and the promise of life for all, but He ascended into heaven without having actually set all of Creation free because of the choices, rewards, and punishments that are yet lacking to be made for the systematic redevelopment of all of Creation -- not only before God, but in relation to each molecule in relation to every other molecule. The New Testament presupposes free will in all that it tells us to do:

"He who would love life
And see good days,
Let him refrain his tongue from evil,
And his lips from speaking deceit.
11 Let him turn away from evil and do good;
Let him seek peace and pursue it.
12 For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
And His ears are open to their prayers;
But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil." (1Peter 3:10-12)

These three verses give us something to exercise our free will on, until we've reclaimed our tongues from the fires of Gehenna, according to this passage being compared with James chapter 3. The tongue can no man tame in the way that one would tame a horse or some other beast of the field. It takes a progressive yielding to the Holy Spirit, which, again, involves our free will as far as how quickly we become the most submitted to the Word of Christ. There can be no just punishment without presupposing freedom of choice to cooperate in playing one's very tiny part in the conformity with the image of Christ process. The New Testament, through St. Paul, teaches repentance. This is impossible without the free will to do so. The Bible teaches not being conformed to this world but being transformed by the renewing of your mind. This requires free will to keep on and on and on with the New Testament because your mind stays as renewed as your hair stays combed. There's always all kinds of wind and other intrusional things to challenge the level that you've attained to. Discipleship to Lord Jesus, which is what all of St. John's writings are about, presupposes following Him step by step which requires as much our free choice as it requires His sustaining/carrying Hand at work.

The problem has been our definitions of free will. Lord Jesus wouldn't jump off of the pinnacle of the Temple because freedom of choice doesn't involve lunacy. Lord Jesus wouldn't come down off of the cross to satisfy the Pharisees because freedom of choice doesn't involve telling the will of God for one's life to go to Hell. Lord Jesus wouldn't show Himself to all of Jerusalem and to the Roman authorities after His resurrection because their free choice to become His disciples didn't involve having their flesh satisfied in all of the particulars of it's demands for sensory proof because the brain could be awed, but there wouldn't be an ounce of faith triggered in their spirits in relation to the Gospel because that would

be considering their own bodies in terms of the data that their bodies could accumulate rather than considering only what God had promised. Free will doesn't involve the satisfaction of emotions. It involves the ability to do the things that God says that we can/should/will do -- no more and no less.

It appears to me that the more free that our will is, then the higher degree of God's Sovereignty is at work to finally reclaim every life. But if everyone is already on puppet strings, then it's less effort and less wisdom on God's part to finally bring everyone in. All He'd have to do is yank all of the dog chains and get the dogs into the house on the New Earth or beyond. To me, the more of a chess game it winds up being between God and the fallen versions of His image, then the greater glory and the greater contentment for Himself and for all when the last rascal has been checkmated. To me, the more free will that's involved, then the more active God's plan would necessarily have to be -- though I'm not implying that God's reacting since all of the promises, judgments, prizes, and every drop of Blood for the successful transfusion was prepared ages ago.

Have you thought that through? That the less free will, which would mean the less conscious that each of us were, then God's plan would seem to involve about as much as Him simply arranging the bodies and talking heads as He wishes. The portraits of Him in Scripture as a warrior seem less dynamic and less meaningful and the wisdom He'd have to share out of all of this would seem less meaningful. After all, how much suffering is there if free will is virtually nonexistent? Did God personally dress you in physical clothing this morning? Animals seem to have free will. Walk out into a field and slap a bull with everything you've got and when he comes after you it's not going to be a matter of instinct alone. It'll be because you really angered him and he's made up his mind and decided with his own free will that you're going to be mashed, stomped, kicked, and hit until you're nothing more than grease and minced meat! This brings me to another question or two:

Is all of the violence in the world being orchestrated by God? What about the shootings, the thefts, the sexual deviancy, the false religions, the false politicians, the mental and bodily torture, the trafficking in millions of human slaves, the blasphemies, the scalding and slowly dismembering abortions, the twisting of God's Words, etc.??

God neither orchestrates it, nor uses it. He uses His Word, His Faith, His Blood, and His Anointing to get everything done. And in saying this, I'm not negating the evil spoken of in Isaiah that God created in judging Israel with the events leading up to the Babylonian captivity, and neither am I attempting to take away from the Scriptures that talk about the redemptive events of Jesus' life, glorification, sufferings, and resurrection as having been 100% orchestrated by God. But to me, it doesn't follow from that that all of the evils in the world are being orchestrated by God. Since Jesus is the Saviour, it would just follow that the events that are ongoing in Jesus' life are continually being orchestrated by God in order to restore the whole Creation to Himself. James chapter 1 says not to say that God tempts any man with temptations, testings, and trials, but each one that's lead astray and away are being messed with by their own unruly desires; undisciplined mind, emotions, and mouth; and by one's own pride which God resists but gives grace to the humble.

St. Paul said that God absolutely always provides the way of escape in a way that you may be able to bare it and get away from what's about to tempt you out of your mind. If the way of escape is always orchestrated by God, yet the way is not always taken by man, then how could there not be free will? The Bible says that God provides the way of escape, and St. Paul's strong language would imply that it's always there and that there's no excuse for not taking it, yet people all of the time don't rightly discern the Bread and the Cup and by failing to judge themselves by rightly discerning His sufferings in their behalf, then they're not chastened by the Lord in those situations and wind up being judged with

the world.

In closing, sometime back I heard someone say: "In order for man to have free will he would have to know the future. We can not know what the next second will bring, so how can we determine anything?"

Perhaps this is where the argument/confusion has been. The measure of free will that we have is a measure of self motivation rather than self determination. It's not the same thing as sowing and reaping which is determining our external circumstances by the faith that comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God and doing what God says when God says to do it, often in the giving realm while expecting a harvest of righteousness in the areas that the Word of God has told us to call them forth for our spirit, soul, body, finances, and social life. Again, the measure of free will that we have is a measure of self motivation, but this is entirely different from walking the Covenants of the Scriptures out by faith between the "Amen" and the "There it is." Entirely different things and it's sounding like this is where some of the confusion has been on this subject.

Free will doesn't keep God from having a free will. It's the Arminian theologians that often argue, and popularize the argument, that man's free will implies a dimension of sovereignty that God won't touch -- which is found absolutely nowhere in Scripture. The Bible is filled to overflowing with God getting His way no matter what, and no matter how artistic He has to become in His art of persuasion. Thomas, Saul of Tarsus, the disciples on the road to Emmaus, and Elymas the sorcerer in the book of Acts were all condemned for not believing the Gospel, but Christ Jesus persuaded them to believe: one with visual evidence, two with blindness, and others by being called stupid fools by a Voice that sounds like the rushing of a mighty river that marred their unbelief forever and transformed them into evangelists, prophets, and teachers. Man's free will throughout the Scriptures of both Old and New Testament has frequently run into the brick wall of God's judgment. God's judgment is His nonnegotiable stand on His will.

Besides, Biblically, the salvation or eternal rejection of Adam and Eve is the only thing to be proven to make a case for either eternal torment or the universal restoration. Many Christian Universalists don't like the doctrine of "Original Sin," but I think it's a beautiful doctrine because when properly presented it CRAMS the Scriptural revelation of the Universal Restoration down the throat of those that believe in it because of the "MUCH MORE" of what Christ Jesus has accomplished. It's simply a version of the Scriptural doctrine of the one and the many equaling the all, or the one standing for the many bringing this or that upon all. It's in Isaiah, Romans, Hebrews and various other places -- whatever anyone chooses to call it. The Scriptures teach that as one man was the damnation of us all, whether that entails oblivion or eternal torment, the obedient death of another man has brought righteousness to all, whether that means temporary torment or instantaneous glorification upon all at their moment of death or the resurrection.

I think that people get confused between "Inherited Righteousness" and "Inheriting the Kingdom" because though the Bible implies both it's only through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and growing in His grace that we come to understand both. Inheriting the Kingdom is over in the area of what 2Corinthians chapter 9 describes as the multiplied fruits of your righteousness [implicitly from God in Christ]. Romans calls righteousness a free gift and the measure of the abundance of His grace, but "inheriting the Kingdom" which is the distinguishing of the haves from the have nots in the Kingdom is something you strive to enter into because the gate is narrow to reigning in life through Christ Jesus.

It's through the Bread and Cup which is too often, too easily set aside as foolishness by Christians. The

Bread envisions His broken body, broken for you with every artery burst and Blood covering you and the whole sacrifice. While the Cup IS THE NEW COVENANT dipped in that holy Blood. It becomes the realization that all of the Blood that I'm seeing in my struggles isn't mine. It's my High Priest's that protects me, gives me the hidden manna of His flesh, and dines with me in the presence of my enemies causing me to fear no evil because He's with me protecting me with His rod and staff as we celebrate the anointing of oil that He's lavishing on me and causing me to dwell in the many mansions of His Father forever. Life is no longer about doing, but about being at the feet of the Shepherd, like my cat is at my feet right now in total contentment purring away. When every care is sufficiently cast upon Him through our free will, He gives us the nations for our inheritance.

If there is no free will, then there are no cares of this life. The cares of this life are what we disobey Him in taking upon ourselves. And if there is no free will, then there is no casting the whole of our cares upon Him so that He can exalt us because of our humility before the Bread and the Cup and to follow Him wherever He goes. If there is no free will, then there is no longer any being blessed with faithful Abraham, according to Galatians 3, and we're no longer heirs of the world together with him. Because that is entered into by relating to Christ Jesus the way that Abraham related to Melchizedec. Melchizedec didn't force the Bread and Cup down Abraham's throat. The salvation of the world isn't based upon the belief of absolutely every individual in the world in Christ -- although they're all destined to, and every knee will bow as every tongue exuberantly, thunderously praises Him that Jesus Christ is Lord.

The salvation of the world is based upon the keeping of the Bread and Cup between God and the believer because the promise of being heir of the world and of the heathen belongs to those who have the faith of Abraham. But every individual on the planet isn't required to express the faith of Abraham before God will pour out His Holy Spirit IN FULLNESS upon ALL flesh and remove the veil that's covered all of the people, according to Isaiah, Joel, various Psalms, and various New Testament Apostles and Prophets. If necessary, Christ will drag all of mankind to Himself solely on the belief of Abraham that He would. But we're offered participation in the divine nature, according to 2Peter 1, Romans, Ephesians, and various other passages and books of the Bible. We choose to repent, according to Acts 17, Acts 20, 1Peter 1, and Revelation 7, but He chooses the preordained paths for us to walk and the intensity of the riches of His grace that we'll experience according to Ephesians 2.

Blood Bought Free Will Through The Crown Of Thorns
By Martin Cisneros

In the ministry of Jesus, no one came to Him unless the Holy Spirit drew them. Under the New Covenant, no one comes to Him unless the Blood draws them, according to Ephesians 2:13. The Blood is what's drawing us, and I personally believe that the Blood is drawing us at all times. Our choices affect how we receive the ministry of Jesus' High Priestly ministry that's drawing us, whether we're experiencing it as the remission of our sin, according to Ephesians 1:7, or whether we're experiencing it as judgment with the world and being guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ according to 1 Corinthians 11 and Hebrews 10. Romans 9 through 11 and Hebrews 10 through 13 illustrates to me that whether we receive the drawing of Christ's Blood upon our lives as kindness or as severity is based upon what we do, whether we receive or sell the birthright, etc.

Hebrews 6 does illustrate for me a hardened spiritual condition that one can enter into through their own works and decisions to where the Blood won't draw them any more, but they'll be subject to eonian fire. With Acts 13:48, and the instance of Israel as a nation, you're getting into the difference between God's Sovereignty where nations are concerned with regards to how much exertion there is on the part of the Blood of Christ, and the difference between the Great Commission which is to each individual with the commandment to repent and believe the Gospel according to Acts 17, Acts 20 and other passages.

God's Sovereignty in Scripture is expressed with regards to where families live, according to Acts 17, where politics is concerned, according to Romans 13, and with regards to nations, according to Daniel 4. But the individual part of the equation and one's self motivating power with regards to responding to the ministry of reconciliation never seem to be taken away from individuals, otherwise why would Peter have preached to them on the Day of Pentecost for them to save themselves from this wicked generation? Why would Romans 10 have said, that if you, not your nation, but if you believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord and that God raised Him from the dead, and if you confess His Lordship, calling upon Him from a heart that has heard the glad tidings, then you will be saved? Otherwise why would we be told to pursue good works, and that those that aren't fruitful shouldn't eat?

If those things were a simple matter exclusively of God at work within us to will and to do for His good pleasure, then why would St. Paul have devoted between 25% and 50% of his epistles to telling us to get off our blessed assurance, get over it, and go and do something that'll feed some mouths and relieve the afflicted?? We're told to not be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our mind, rather than being told "here's where all of these godly thoughts are miraculously coming into your head from! It's a little scary as God's rebooting your brain and taking over your consciousness without your participation, but it's all for the best..."

Free will, not expressed as self determination, but as self motivation in response to the call of the Gospel is never set aside by a single page of the New Testament. Some Christian Universalists in opposition to the subject of a person having free will would allude to Romans 11:32 and Romans 11:36 as though in emphasizing those verses that relate to God's Sovereignty over Israel, that somehow they've brought anything substantial in arguing against free will. Don't laugh! I've honestly seen it done many times!

Contextually this verse in Romans 11:32 is talking about God's dealings with Israel as a nation, not about individuals. Chapter 11 goes on to say that for from Him and through Him and to Him are all things, which again is talking about all of His dealings with Israel. Both can be used as references to

His care of all nations, but it doesn't relate to His workings with individuals which are based upon the commandment to repent, faith or disobedience to the Gospel presented, and blessings and judgments that follow our response to the Gospel.

Colossians 1 says that we become rooted and grounded [in our faith] when we're established in the truth of His reconciling all things to Himself through the Blood of His Cross. In that chapter there's what God is ultimately doing and the fact that it does us good when we yield to it, even if like the Prodigal Son we're running home to fill our empty bellies at first rather than out of concern for our heavenly Father. His goodness brings us to repentance, not His Sovereign rejection for the eons. For unregretted are the graces and the calling of God, according to Romans 11:29 in the Concordant Literal New Testament.

In God's Sovereignty when the fullness of time comes for each individual to either receive God's grace or to become clay broken by the potter to be reshaped at the conclusion of the ages, whether we're vessels of honor or vessels for common, breakable use, [all of this] comes down to our free will. Again, not our self determination, but our free motivation in response to the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness.

Some have suggested passages from Romans 9 and John chapter 6 as rebuttals to what I've said about our free will as self motivation rather than as self determination, however, as we shall see, both of those passages become problematic when attempting to apply them outside of their context in Scripture.

There was never a change in thought between the 8th and 12th chapters of Romans. It all has to do with illustrating a mind controlled by the Spirit of the Word and the mind controlled by the law of sin and death. It's written from the perspective of the Holy Spirit being on the right side of the spirit-filled believer and it's illustrating essentially the same truths illustrated by Galatians so that we'll make fruit-bearing decisions in taking the ministry of reconciliation to the nations. Romans 9 and John 6 both have to do with His dealings with Old Covenant Israel in terms of the Old Covenant.

Israel is the clay and the Gospel is the Potter in St. Paul's illustration. St. Paul was illustrating the crushing of Old Testament Judaism that was about to take place, while still extending the hope into the Christian's mind from generation to generation that they too would be reformed by the Gospel and would become honorable vessels during the millenium.

Pharaoh is a type of the law that wouldn't let the people go. God was illustrating through St. Paul the harshness of the law that wouldn't allow the people of Israel in St. Paul's day to see the glorious Gospel being brought by the New Moses anticipated by Deuteronomy in the person of Jesus Christ. God hardened the heart of the law in order to contrast it with the administration of the Son of God. St. Paul was illustrating the attitude of Jacob, a picture of the Church, and demonstrating the law in the person of Esau who wasn't able to inherit the promises through self-effort that was void of the Spirit and the Word.

Nothing in Romans is meant to set the recreated spirit at variance with the mind of the spirit and it's responses by the mercies of God to the gifts emerging within the new creation in Christ that are supposed to be practiced to perfection until all of the creation is freed by the manifestation of the sons of God. The Sons of God being manifested isn't through their becoming zombies that are incapable of being judges and saviours together with their Head as they continue in His Word in the same way as He continues in the Word of the Father, according to John 8. St. Paul repeatedly appeals to our free wills in his preaching of repentance throughout all of his teachings and most especially (though not

exclusively) in Acts and in Romans chapters 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. And again, Romans chapters 9 and 11 were illustrations of what he was talking about, but there was no change in thought throughout what's between Romans chapter 8 and Romans chapter 12.