

## God Idol: God has no Free Will

If God is free then:

We can make sense of relating to him as a person.

His actions are more meaningful for they don't have to happen and they do. Freedom is about control, and control requires alternatives.

If God is wholly self-sufficient then God is free.

Not being free is a flaw.

A God without free will cannot be God to us and he cannot be sufficient for all we need.

He is an example for us

His actions are praiseworthy.

If God is not free then atheism is true and we are using God as a crutch not as a God.

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Make a choice:

1 "God is necessarily good simply because he is".

2 "God is perfectly good because He always chooses the good."

The latter is what most people would choose. But to choose it is to choose the other in a sense. God choosing the good only matters if he does so because he just is good. God can choose only the good without being necessarily good. A dog may not bite people without being necessarily placid by nature.

Does saying God is by nature good the same as saying he could be opposed by evil? Religion says to say that God is good is only to say he is the paradigm of goodness and evil is not a threat to him for it is parasitic on good and a form of good itself. God's nature determines what is good which is indirectly to determine what is less than good, that is evil. So far we see that free will for God is in no way an inspiration to us. It is too different from what we need and want free will to be.

God is not good by choice. He cannot do wrong. He has no feelings. Saying God loves or is angry is symbolic. This is not a God who can attract anybody. Those who say they love him are kidding us.

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Historic Mormonism always said that the Catholic and Protestant version of God is only imaginary. In the Temple Ceremony Satan is depicted as teaching the notion of a God whose circumference is everywhere and whose centre is nowhere. This abstract God is described as seeing and hearing but in fact it does not. The Bible condemns the worship of gods who neither see nor hear.

Would a God who has no free will be any better?

No - it would be worse.

### GOD'S "FREE" WILL

If God has free will, it is too different from ours to inspire us. He does not have to decide what course is the best for just knows. He does not have to suffer from passions and other things that limit freedom. Our free will, if we have it, is boxed in on many sides. God has no free will in any sense that can have meaning and inspiration for us.

If you went out walking and found a child all beaten up, it would be considered gravely evil if you did not give some time and some resources to do something for her. God however is considered good if he refrains from doing anything and even if he inflicts some malady on your mind that makes you walk on by. Such mental illness would be God being the free agent for you instead of you being the free agent. God has an infinity of resources and time and he does nothing. It costs him nothing to help and he will not help. Yet he is considered God and to be good. This is not a being who has free will in any sense that we can care about.

## GOD LOVES WITHOUT FREE WILL!

Christians do not believe God can sin if he wants to. They adore this God as the only being that matters. He can't be a role model. A creature who can sin but who does not but who is perfect in virtue is a proper role model. If such creatures exist then our devotion to God insults them. It also insults us for we need a role model. It is somewhat to blame for the evil we do. So why is God given such unfair and extreme importance? It can only be because of his infinite and almighty power. Believers want his power and they want it on their side. Even if they feel they have to be subject to this power, this is only because if you can't get your own way, you have to feel you have your own way by accepting God's will.

The Christians will answer that God matters for he is the source of all good and all existence. But if he has no free will he may be perfect and be able to implement perfect good but he is not good in the way a being who can be evil but who refuses to be is. His goodness is functional. He is good in the way a cake is good.

A God without free will is not really a person or anything you can have a true relationship with. Believers feel a relationship but that is the same as the relationship the pagans felt with their gods of stone and wood and metal. The idolaters prove that our feelings of a relationship do not mean a real relationship is happening. All the Christian God is good for is being the source of good. If God is only important as a representation of good then it follows that it is okay if you see your gnome statue in the garden as a representation of goodness.

Christians who believe in an immutable God that is a God who is totally perfect and so cannot change and who is outside time still claim that he is perfect love. But this God cannot sin for he is good now and cannot change. This ruins their doctrine that we cannot love unless we can sin. It is a contradiction to say that a loving God who cannot sin gave us free will so that we could love too. When God can love without being able to sin so can we. Peter Abelard argued against this that our power to do evil instead of good is not a blessing but an infirmity. But this is really a renunciation of the freedom defence. Only an evil God could give us freedom to sin if that freedom is not good. Compatibilism is the idea that though we don't have free will in the sense that we can go against the way we are programmed if we do what we are programmed to do we are free and that is free will. They are just changing the meaning of the phrase free will. Another solution is to defend this compatibilism and say that God is determined to be good and is good without compulsion which is enough to mean that he has free will. But compatibilism really destroys theism for if we could be programmed to be freely good then God should not let us sin. If we sin it is his fault.

Sin is defined as an ending of a relationship with God so God cannot sin for he cannot end a relationship with himself (page 116, *The Puzzle of God*). Since God is all-powerful and knows all and when sin is defined not as a thing but as the absence of good or a good that mistakenly falls short of real good it follows that God cannot sin for he is too powerful and intelligent to fall short. If he had made us more powerful and smarter we would not sin or at least not as much. He has not given us the power to make ourselves good in any great measure. For example, we have to struggle hard to be good and don't have the miraculous power to make it easier and yet power and intelligence are the reasons why he is good. God does not want us to be holy or good.

The Catholic book, *Why Does God?* (page 30), says that God is total and absolute perfection and he is more free than anybody on earth because the law he keeps is his nature and he is what he wants to be. It is identical with him. So God could have made us the same way but did not and that makes him evil. Abelard is vindicated by this doctrine.

For this doctrine that God is free though unable to do wrong to be right it would be necessary for God to make himself before he comes into existence which is an absurdity. I mean if you can't help your nature (that what makes you the kind of being you are) and it makes you want to live the way it makes you live then you are hardly free are you? If your nature makes you steal then are you to blame for stealing? No way unless you have made your nature yourself which you cannot do! But you might object that there are people who change their nature. But they would not be doing that unless their nature wanted them to do it so that is us back to square one.

The view of St Thomas Aquinas was that all sin is caused by an error existing in the reason and that God cannot sin for God cannot err (*Summa Book 1, Chapter 95*). To have free will means you have defects that enable you to err. Even if you will never use these defects, they still need to be there so that you have the option of sin. So if God cannot err he does not have free will. God then is to blame for our sins for he made us a bit blind. He could have made us smarter when we are about to make choices. That way we will see the right course and ineluctably follow it. We that we will not err for error is

necessarily involuntary. So we will not sin. God has left things so that we would sin and yet he says that sin is that which should not exist!

The only solution that is offered to the contradiction between a God who cannot sin and the free will defence is that God has no choice but to do good but he can be creative and decide between different kinds of good which one he wants to do (page 98, Unblind Faith, SCM Press). This solution does not work at all but shows that the contradiction is beyond solving for that kind of freedom would have sufficed for us. And even more so when God is supposed to be perfect so perfection is in not having free will to sin. And the "solution" denies that you need to be able to do evil to be free which contradicts the free will defence totally. So we are left with a God who does not love and yet his love is the alleged justification for his giving us free will and it turns out this free will, as in being able to do evil rather than good, is not needed at all if God is love.

Free will depends on not knowing the future for sure. If you could see what you would do in the future you wouldn't really be free any more. You might see what you will do but we are talking about actually seeing what you will do so that you are totally certain you will do it. God who knows the future cannot have free will.

To have a nature is to have limits. Yet being all good, God cannot have any limits to his goodness for if he had he would not be all good. But it is better for God to be happy and make a person to be happy than for him not to make a person at all. Believers deny this and say that God does not have to make anything which is plainly wrong. So unless God makes an infinity of happy persons which he has not done he is not all good. The only solution to this is to deny either that God wants people to be happy or that happy people should be made for the more happiness the better which amounts to saying the same thing. He only cares for himself so how can he have free will for he can't be any different?

Islam and Christianity hold that God made all things out of nothing and the creation is not made from God. But to put something where there is nothing requires infinite power. God is his power for God is an immaterial reality. He is one entity without parts. But God must have made all things from himself for there is no power outside his power. So God and the creation must be the same thing. When we are God then when we sin, the free will defence cannot be true for God sins. Also, if we are God then God is not a person for he is all creation and must be a force. That would mean, as Spinoza argued, that there is no free will for the will is made of a force that makes it go after what it goes after and it cannot go any other way though it feels it can. The concept of God requires free will and yet it contradicts it meaning that God is an incoherent concept and should be abolished.

## FREE WILL CREATOR

The religious position that God has free will is merely assumed. Nothing can be said to make it credible. No step can be taken to make it reasonable.

If there is a God this free will is his most personal and important power. We are told he cannot create without free will for that would mean some force in him rather than him made all things. If that is the case then you don't need God as a possible explanation for the existence of the universe.

## DIVINE CHARACTER: THE PHILOSOPHERS SAY

God is pure actuality. In other words he is act or action or will.

He has no character but his will is his own doing. Character is passive in the sense that you cannot make yourself have a good character but have to take the right and relevant steps to let it appear by itself. If it were not then something better than him is doing it.

Religion says, "God does good of his own will and without being compelled to. In that sense God has free will." But it says God cannot change his nature or control it meaning he cannot control his will for it is part of his nature or more correctly what his nature is all about.

Worse, even if God is not forced to be what he is that still does not mean he has free will. A dog is not forced to be what it is but it has no free will. And God does not have a moral type free will where he can choose to be good or evil. He does not have a free will that counts as real free will. You can freely act without it being a moral concern and much of what we will is like that.

## GOD KNOWS THE FUTURE SO HE CANNOT CHOOSE

God decides that there will be one sun for a solar system. He sees that this will happen and be done. How can he have free will for once he foresees what he will do he cannot avoid doing it? If your prediction or clairvoyance will come true then

you cannot make a choice that will avert it.

Religion will answer that there is no will be for God. He makes all decisions at once and this once has no past or future. God is outside time.

That is actually a distraction. The problem is God can't choose when he is 100% certain what he would do. It does not matter if God is in or out of time.

WILLIAM LANE CRAIG SAYS

Theologian William Lane Craig says that this notion of free will is wrong:

"Free will is all about being able to do something and its opposite and it could be one way as well as the other."

If so, God can be good and deserve praise for being good even though he has no ability to be bad or sin and has not chosen to be good.

For Craig, it is enough that you are freely able to do Good A or Good B. All you need is the choice to be up to you - for you to own the choice. To own it you don't have to be able to do the opposite of Good A or the opposite of Good B.

This allows him to explain how Jesus could be really tempted but not be able to sin. It was a real temptation. Craig is a libertarian about free will but not the kind of libertarian where it has to be all about doing good or its reverse. The latter is based on what he calls the Principle of Alternative Possibilities.

Craig says that we can ask why God did not make us all sinless. He says he could not for then we would be as worthy of worship then as God. He is worshipped then for how he uses his free will only for good though he cannot do evil and we would be the same.

You could say that God could have done this but its his choice not to and we just have to respect that.

Craig denies compatibilism which says that outside forces can fix what you choose and you can call that a choice. "My choice is causally determined but nonetheless free. I deny that, holding that a free choice cannot be causally determined by external factors." He is right there. Plus if the factors are "internal" they are still external if you didn't put them there!

While a cause may or may not be force, it could be so compatibilism gives us no assurance that our choices are really voluntary. The opportunity to steal is one cause in you stealing but does not let you say it forced you.

We have learned then that if God has a compatibilist free will then maybe he is not really free! And we have learned that not all accounts of free will think that free will is just about working with opposites - choosing good or evil. But it does not change the fact that only a being that has that type can be truly good.

Being a who chooses only different types of good is not as good as being b who chooses good though he has the power to choose its opposite just as easily or far more easily.

DESIRE

People may preach about free will but what they mean is that free will matters and desire matters too. They want the two to go together. In fact the desire side is what they put the most weight on not free will. A God with no desire like we have is irrelevant. Only they know why they want such an uninspirational God. The reason is they want to do the inspiring for God. It makes them feel they are better than God. Their humility is not real.

God is the being who can make himself perfectly happy. To see God as a being with desires is wrong. If he desires something then he is lacking and he is not God. In the Bible, God's desires are a metaphor.

FINALLY

Why is there so much interest in a God who does not really love and when we define love as freely being good when you could be bad? This God is not relevant to the truly good person.