

Freewill

Louis Rushmore

Nothing should be more obvious than that sound, developed minds are able to make choices; this is called **freewill**. Dear reader, you **freely** exercised your **willpower** and **chose** to read these words. The fact that you make many choices or decisions daily proves that you have **freewill**.

Mankind can and must also make religious choices; we have freewill in religion, too. But, these choices are more important than any of the choices we make every day. Choices made in religion affect one's relationship with God. Therefore, making wrong religious choices or failing to realize that God expects one to exercise freewill is very serious. Such mistakes will prevent souls from living with God in Heaven forever, after this life.

Happily, our loving God recorded in the Gospel (New Testament) what choices in religion He desires us to make; God has not left us without guidance. Your friends in the churches of Christ are interested in making the correct religious choices, based on God's teaching in the Bible. May we help you learn more about God's teaching -- so you, too, can more easily make the correct religious choices?

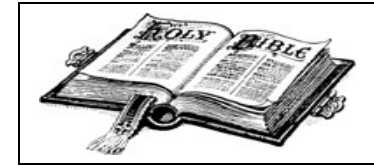
The Bible is filled with references to freewill and religious choices mankind must make. One outstanding example is found in Joshua 24:15. There, Joshua, a famous Old Testament character, made this sober charge to the nation he was leading: ". . . **choose** you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served . . . or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." **The best choice anyone can make is to serve God!** (http://www.bible-infonet.org/bin/short_articles/Living/Freewill.htm)

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BACK TO THE BIBLE



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Back To The Bible is a quarterly evangelistic outreach for the expressed purpose of helping people study the Bible. It is a work of the Belle church of Christ which is located at the corner of 8th and Oak in Belle, Missouri. Editors of this publication are Jerry McDonald and Thomas McDonald. Be sure to continue to check on the things on our website (<http://www.bellecoc.com>). First we have our email discussion list where you can ask questions and get answers (all answers will come from the KJV). Secondly, we have Bible corresponding courses. You can either mail them to our Post Office Box (P.O. Box 381, Belle, MO 65013), or email them to bellecoc@bellecoc.com. And finally we have a Youtube program that you can see each week by going to the Youtube link on our website. Past issues of this publication can also be found on our website. We hope that we can be of service to you in the coming years

Service Times:

Sunday Morning Bible Study.....9:30
Sunday Morning Worship.....10:30
Sunday Evening Worship.....6:00
Wednesday Evening Bible Study.....7:00
Ladies Bible Class Third Monday of Each Month.....7:00

**"There is a fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Emmanuel`s veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains.
(William Cowper)"**

George Arthur Jackson Sr.

In the long ago, Zechariah said, "*In that day there shall be a fountain opened... for sin and for uncleanness*" (13:1). While God has always placed great emphasis upon the importance of blood, the devil has always belittled it and sought to eradicate it from the gospel of God. God said to Moses "*For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul*" (Leviticus 17:11).

During the Jewish age, rivers of blood were shed, all of which pointed to the blood that Jesus was to shed on the cross for the sins of the world. In the fullness of time, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1:14) He who created the worlds voluntarily "*..made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in*

fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:7,8).

That through His blood sinners might be cleansed. It is through the saving power of His blood that the sinner is justified, redeemed, made nigh to God, sanctified, loosed from his sins. and put away his sins (Rom. 5:9; Eph. 1:7; 2:13; Heb. 10:29; 9: 24-26; Rev. 1:5;). By the blood of Christ sinners may have peace with God and may have their conscience cleansed (Col.1:20; Heb. 9:13,14).

The New Covenant was dedicated by the blood of Christ. The Lord's supper commemorates the shedding of His blood and keeps His sacrifice ever fresh in our memories (1 Cor.10:16). With His own blood He purchased the church (Acts 20:28).

In His death Jesus shed His blood. In the act of baptism we reach the benefits of His death, that is the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the hope of eternal life (Rom. 6:3,4). It is thus that sinners wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Copied from: *Apologetics Press :: Bible Bullets*

After This, the Judgment

Kyle Butt, M.A.

Life is not fair. Every day, in hundreds of ways, this fact makes itself abundantly clear to us. September 11, 2001 marked a day when the unfairness of this physical life became especially apparent. The entire world stood with mouth agape as it watched four hijacked United States commercial planes used as weapons against our unsuspecting nation. Within minutes, the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were rocked by the impact of these planes. Fires burned, smoke billowed, and the loss of innocent human life shocked us all. Through the carnage and terror, one primary feeling emerged from the collective mind of the United States—we will find and punish whoever did this.

When this type of tragedy occurs and the heinousness of criminal activity comes into full focus, the question always arises: Is it right in God's eyes for humans to demand that the perpetrators be brought to justice and punished for their dastardly act of vicious cowardice? And if so, who has the authority to administer such punishment. Fortunately, the Bible provides clear answers to such questions. In Romans 13, the inspired apostle Paul explained that each citizen has an obligation to be obedient to the governing authorities because *"the authorities that exist are appointed by God."* Furthermore, the government *"does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil"* (Romans 13:1-4).

The Bible plainly teaches that the government has the God-given authority to execute wrath on those who do evil. What does the statement "does not bear the sword in vain" mean in this context? Without a doubt, the sword in the first century (as well as in previous and subsequent centuries) was looked upon as a weapon of death. The Old Testament is replete with references to the sword being just such an instrument. Hosea 11:6 records: *"And the sword shall slash in his cities, devour his districts, and consume them."* Again in Jeremiah 15:3 it is written: *" 'And I will appoint over them four forms of destruction,' says the Lord: 'the sword to slay, the dogs to drag, the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy.' "* New Testament references support the idea as well. Revelation 6:8 states: *"So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill*

with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth" (emp. added). When Paul stated that the government does not bear the sword in vain, he explicitly advocated the idea that the government reserves the right to administer capital punishment.

One reason God has given this right to the government can be found in Ecclesiastes 8:11: *"Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."* If proper punishment is not meted out to the perpetrators of crimes, then more and more people embolden themselves to commit crimes against the government and their fellow human beings.

Along with this authority, the government has been given a tremendous responsibility to administer justice properly and without partiality. The Proverbs writer commented: *"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice, but when a wicked man rules, the people groan"* (29:2). It is true that many unrighteous rulers have taken power and misused the authority of the government. Consider Herod, for instance, who *"killed the brother of John with the sword"* (Acts 12:2). Or bring to mind the evil Roman Emperor Nero who captured Christians and tortured them via heinous acts of persecution. And no list of evil rulers would be complete without the infamous Hitler, who murdered over six million Jews. But even though these rulers have abused the office and authority that God gave the governing powers, the authority given to the government by God has not been lessened because of their abuse. The government *"does not bear the sword in vain."*

Unfortunately, certain unalterable limitations make it impossible for the government to catch and punish every person who has committed criminal acts. Some villains inevitably slip through the cracks of the justice system and never are punished in this life. Each year thousands of parents abuse their own children physically and sexually and receive none of their just deserts. Each year hundreds of murder cases are filed away stamped "UNSOLVED," and will stay that way. Each day thieves loot and plunder, making themselves fat and rich off of the toil and labor of their victims, yet they get away scot-free.

Because of the injustice that goes unpunished, many wonder if there is a righteous God Who sees and acts on behalf of the victims. They need wonder no more, because God *"has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness"* (Acts 17:31). The wicked have been warned that *"God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap"* (Galatians 6:8). And: *" 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"* (Hebrews 10:30-31). While it is the case that God's retributive justice is not meted out to its full extent in this present age, it is not the case that it will remain muted so forever. Paul had this to say to those who persisted in wickedness: *"But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who 'will render to each one according to his deeds': eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil"* (Romans 2:5-9). Some may escape the sword of the state, but they will not escape the sword of their God. (<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/1669>)