

Human responsibility

God is the creator of the whole universe.¹ He is absolutely sovereign, upholding and directing all things (*including human actions*) according to the counsel of his will.²

As human beings we do have choices, and these are real choices with real effects on our lives.³ Scripture teaches us that man is utterly responsible for his choices.⁴ God holds every man responsible for his actions, and at the judgment day, He will render to each one according to his works.⁵ For example, scripture teaches us that God chose the elect in Christ unto salvation before the foundation of the world. Our election is not based on what we choose or what we do. It is solely based on God.⁶ Nonetheless, believers are commanded go out into the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes in Christ will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned.⁷ Thus, hearers of the gospel are responsible for their response; if they reject the gospel, they are guilty of unbelief.⁸

We are commanded to do all things for the glory of God.⁹ Christians are to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, yet we also acknowledge that it is God who works in us both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.¹⁰

God's revealed will through His word is the standard of human responsibility and each of us will give an account of himself to God.¹¹ Therefore, we have the responsibility of applying the revealed will of God to every detail of our day to day living.¹²

God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are both fundamentally true and do not contradict each other. A sincere, humble desire to understand the ways of God ought to be the basis of our quest to know how these two facts link up together.

¹ See position paper on Creation

² See position paper on God's providence

³ Wayne Grudem, 1994. Systematic Theology: An introduction to Biblical doctrine. pp. 681

⁴ Ezekiel 18:20; Matthew 12:36-37

⁵ Rom 2:1-16; Rev 20:11-13

⁶ See position paper on Election

⁷ Mark 16:15-16; 1 John 3:23

⁸ Matthew 11:20-24; John 3:18; Acts 13:38-41; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

⁹ 1 Corinthians 10:31

¹⁰ Philippians 2:12-13

¹¹ Romans 14:12; Hebrews 4:13

¹² Packer, J. I. (1961). Divine Sovereignty and Human responsibility. In: Packer, J. I. Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God. Inter-Varsity Fellowship, England.