

Free Will? (“The Ark is in The Temple”)

Revelation 11:15-12:2

#22 in our series “The Gospel According to Jesus: The Revelation”

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Prayer

Lord, we look to you, standing on a throne as if you had just been slaughtered. We ask, Lord Jesus, that you would preach and that you would even use us to do it. Father, we pray this in Jesus’ name, Amen.

Revelation 11:15

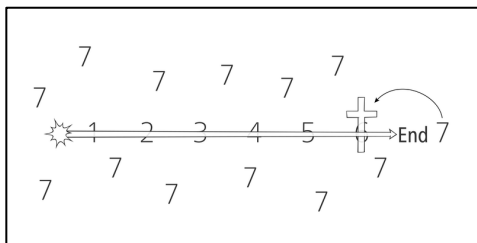
Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”

This is the End.

This isn’t the start of the Millennium; we’ll talk about that eventually.

But here the kingdom of this world has become the Kingdom of our God, and He will reign forever and ever. This is the End of all things, including space and time as we experience them.

By now, you should have this picture emblazoned in your brain.



In the Revelation, there are all these series of sevens just like the days of creation. On the Seventh Day, which is the Seventh age, which is eternal, “Everything is good and it is finished.” Each time we get to seven we come to the End of *chromos*—chronological time.

You’ll remember that John is, like, watching this revelation from eternity.

Now he’s watched the Lamb on the throne unwrap the seven seals.

He’s heard seven trumpets sound, as they would on the Day of Atonement.

He’s watched as the walls of this world come tumbling down . . .

Just as the walls of Jericho came tumbling down . . .

As the seven priests blew the seven trumpets on the Seventh Day the seventh time

around the city.

This is the End, the *telos*, the perfection. This is what the story is all about. We are about to see the reason for all of this pain and suffering...

Revelation 11:16-18

And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was [And not "to come" because He's already there!], for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth."

We're going to read about folks rewarded, and the dead judged in chapter 20, but here in Chapter 11 it's *already* happened:

God has destroyed the destroyers of the earth... (that's satan, but not *just* satan)

So who are the destroyers of the earth?

Well... "destroyers of the earth" who was supposed to take care of the earth?

Did God appoint someone to "keep it" like a gardener keeps a garden?

This word for destroy (*diaptheiro*) is used just a few times in the Bible—twice by Paul in this form—and it's used of people . . . In 1 Timothy 6:5 it's used of people that think "godliness is a means of gain..." Can you imagine that? That would be like people who take the knowledge of good and evil in order to make themselves in the image of God.

- As if we could make ourselves in the image of God by taking knowledge of Good and Evil...
- As if we could justify ourselves and gain the Kingdom of Heaven.
- Someone that thinks this way has a destroyed mind.

The other place Paul uses the word, *diaptheiro* is in 2 Cor. 4:16.

...Though our outer [man] is wasting away [diaptheiro—"getting destroyed,"] our inner [man] is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction [thlipsis—"tribulation"] is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison...for we know that if the tent [tabernacle] that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2 Cor. 4:16-17).

He's saying that our old selves must get tribulated and destroyed in time . . . so we can receive a new self, eternal in the heavens—a temple that will house a weight of glory beyond compare. In Revelation 11, "The destroyers are destroyed" and "God has taken his great power and begun to reign."

How did that happen?

We witnessed no apocalyptic battle...

And what is God's great power?

I think we all imagine that God's great power is something like this:

He makes people like this: [Peter begins to cut paper in order to make a paper doll.]

Except, He makes us from dust.

We make things from dust: a computer is made from dust.

We think that God's great power and glory is that He kind of makes people like we would make people like paper dolls. Then He speaks to them like I would speak to the paper dolls I've just made.

He speaks His Word.

He gives them His Law saying,

"I command you to dance for me."
"Hey you're not very good dancers!"
Dance or you will witness my great power and glory!"
"OK *fine!* You're pretty bad at that"
[And then He sets us on fire (Peter sets the dolls on fire) and watches us burn.]
"Yeah. Now you know who has the power and the glory!"



Is that “His great power and glory?”

If it is... I’m scared, and so I’ll try to dance... but I won’t dance well.

What is God’s great power and glory?

Well, in Revelation 11: 15 the seventh and final trumpet sounds. Revelation 11:15-18 is what has happened. And now . . . Revelation 11:19, the climax, the big reveal, the reason for all the pain, suffering, and tribulation of space and time.
[Drumroll please]

Verse 19: *“Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.”*

Ta Da . . . Ta Da . . . Ta Da . . . Ta Da . . .

I think this is maybe the fourth time we’ve read this, and you may still be thinking: *“OK, they found the lost furniture . . . What’s the big deal?”*

We ask that question because we didn’t pay attention in Sunday school.

We're biblically illiterate, but thanks to Steven Spielberg's *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, now we know:

Indiana Jones: *You see? Tanis is one of the possible resting places of the Lost Ark.?*

Board member: *The Lost Ark?*

Indiana Jones: *Yeah, the Ark of the Covenant. The chest the Hebrews used to carry around the Ten Commandments.*

Board member: *What do you mean the Commandments? Are you talking about the Ten Commandments?*

Indiana Jones: *Yes the actual Ten Commandments. The original stone tablets that Moses brought down out of Mount Hereby and smashed if you believe in that sort of thing. Didn't you guys ever go to Sunday school?*

Board member: *Well, uh...*

Indiana Jones: *Oh look. The Hebrews took the broken pieces and put them in the ark. When they settled in Canaan they put the ark in a place called the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem where it stayed for many years until all of a sudden – whoosh it was gone.*

Board member: *Where'd it go?*

Indiana Jones: *Well nobody knows where or when.*

Board member: *What does this ark look like?*

Indiana Jones: *There's a picture of it right here. That's it.*

Board members: *Good God.*

Indiana Jones: *Yes it's just what the Hebrews thought.*

Board member: *Now what's that supposed to be coming out of there?*

Indiana Jones: *Lightning. Fire. The Power of God or something.*

Board members: *Beginning to understand Hitler's interest in this.*

Oh yes, the Bible speaks of the Ark leveling mountains and laying waste to entire regions. An army which carries the Ark before it is invincible.

"The Army that carries the Ark is invincible."

That means they always conquer—and that's what this whole book is about.

Remember what Jesus said to the seven churches seven times?

1. "To the one who conquers... I grant the tree of life in the paradise of God."

2. "The one who conquers, will not be hurt by the second death" (the death of death).
3. "To the one who conquers... hidden manna and a new name."
4. "To the one who conquers... authority over the nations... and the bright morning star."
5. "To the one who conquers... white robes and the book of life."
6. "The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of the living God."
7. "To the one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne...
That's also His Father's throne! That's the throne of GOD! That's big!

So, how do we conquer? We need the Ark!
"The Army that carries the Ark is invincible."
 Of course, Hitler wanted the Ark.
 Of course, we *all* want the Ark.
"The One that carries the Ark is invincible."
"The One that carries the Ark has Free Will."

I mean, whatever that one wills will happen.
 And whatever that one *doesn't* will, *won't* happen.¹

The Ark of the Covenant is like the ultimate example of this thing that we loosely call "free will."

The dictionary defines freedom as "the power... to act, speak or think without hindrance or restraint." So, a "free will" would be a will that wills without restraint—a will that wills what it will without being determined by another will.

We all seem to want free will, and yet, we're terrified of free will.
 And worst of all, we don't really know what it is...
 We imagine *what* it does, but we don't stop to consider *what* it is...

I read about an Irish prisoner who escaped from prison by tunneling under the prison walls. He came up in a playground, where little children were playing. Unable to restrain himself, he began to jump up and down exclaiming, "I'm free. I'm free. I'm free." A little girl looked at him with scorn in her eyes and said, "That's nothing . . . I'm four... You're free, but I'm four."

So who's free and what is free will?

[Peter starts singing.] *"I'm proud to be an American, cause at least I know I'm free?"*
 Are you free?
 Is the ability to choose between Coke and Pepsi at 7-11 free will?
 Is random choice freedom?
 Is chaos, freedom . . . or bondage?

¹ So, the one with absolutely free will must have willed his own will.
 That sounds attractive at first, but it does present some problems.

What is a free will?

You know? American Christians, in particular, defend God with “free will.”
When folks ask: “Why is there suffering in the world?”

“Why would a good God, send people to Hell?”

We say stuff like, “Well God won’t violate our free will.”

It’s this idea that God’s Will will endlessly abdicate to our will—our free will.

“We have free will,” we like to say.

And yet for 2000 years, Christians have debated as to whether or not we actually *do* have free-will.

Some say we don’t have free will, we’re predestined. It’s actually a lovely idea, for it means that we don’t save our selves, *God* saves us. But it’s a horrifying idea, for it seems to turn people into robots. And if there is an endless hell, God must’ve created some people for nothing but torture.

Some say we’re not predestined; we have free will.

It’s a lovely idea for it means that we’re not robots, but persons capable of love.

But it’s a horrifying idea because none of us seem to be capable of saving ourselves, that is, living a life of perfect love... We can’t bear the responsibility.

Scripture claims that apart from a miracle, we’re slaves to sin and actually dead.

In which case, God can’t violate our free will, for we don’t have one.

And yet we’ve read the Law: “You will Love” and it’s impossible to Love without a free will.

So, for 2000 years we’ve debated, fought wars, and divided the church over free will, and the term “free will,” as such, can’t even be found in a good English Bible.

There’s reference to a “free-will offering” in the Old Testament, but in Hebrew, the word translated “free will” really means “your will” and there’s no mention of freedom.

And yet there must be a word, somewhere in the Bible, that describes what we mean by “free will.”

Sometimes when I hear people talking about “free will,” I think, “*Wow that sounds like Heaven.*”

And sometimes when I hear people talk about “free will,” I think, “*Holy Crap, that sounds like Hell.*”

Well let’s think, for just a minute, about this thing that we call “free will.” That is:

“A will that wills what it will without restraint... the restraint of other wills.”

For a slave, that sounds like heaven... right?

Think about Israel coming out of bondage in Egypt.
They thought freedom from the will of Pharaoh was the Promised Land.
And yet, God had a far greater freedom in mind for them.

A free will is a will not constrained by anyone else's will.
Societies constrain individual wills with a corporate will called the law.
Sigmund Freud wrote the seminal book, *Civilization and Its Discontents*.
In it, he points out that civilization is dependent upon repressed wills...
It's dependent on people who say to themselves, "*I will to sleep with my neighbor's pretty wife, but I will repress my will in subjection to the corporate will*"—the law.

Do you think we'll be repressed in Heaven, our Promised Land?
Most people think we will; they can't imagine anything other than that.

Paul wrote, "*For freedom Christ has set us free. Let us not submit again to a yoke of slavery.*" He's talking about the law.

But the law isn't just ten commandments written on stone.
Whenever you think, "*I should*"— whenever you should on yourself, you're probably referencing a law written on your heart—and, by the way, the prophets claim that the human heart is made of stone... until God performs a miracle.

The law is on your heart, but one day it will be *within* your heart (Jer. 31:33).
And in that day no one will look for the Ark or even think of it, prophesies Jeremiah (3:16).

Well, whenever you think, "*I should,*" you're referencing a law impinging upon your heart, and thereby admitting that your heart is not free.

Now, this is a great irony, but what we normally mean by "freedom of choice," is not a free will, but actually the bondage of the will.

As soon as you begin to deliberate between choices, you recognize that you're not of one will, but deliberating between two wills. Make sense?

When is a dancer most free?

- When she consciously chooses each step, thinking, "I could put my foot here or I could put my foot there... Oh, I should put it here."
- Or is she most free when she's not even conscious of making a choice because the choice is making her, for it has become her nature—when her body is in communion with the rhythm and logic of the dance?

Soren Kierkegaard wrote:

"Freedom which equally well chooses the good or the evil, is nothing but an abrogation of freedom and a despair of any explanation of it."

That is freedom is not deliberating between Good and evil... and if you do, it just reveals that you don't really know what either one is or isn't.

"...Emphasizing freedom of choice, as such, means the sure loss of freedom..."
Writes Kierkegaard.

"Freedom really is freedom only when, in the same moment...it rushes with infinite speed to bind itself. Freedom is the choice whose truth is that there can be no choice."

I think that means that a dancer is only free when she dances without thinking about her dancing, but solely because she's surrendered to the music.

Or think of it this way:

Have you ever experienced a moment in which you suddenly thought to yourself, *"Wow, there is no other place else I'd rather be—no other place and no other time?"*

Maybe it's a moment listening to one of your kids sing you a song.

Perhaps it's a moment making love to your bride.

Perhaps it's an awesome bite of pizza when you're really hungry.

You think, *"There's no other place I'd rather be, than right here, right now."*

It's perfect rest, *but* it doesn't mean you're doing nothing—you're doing something; you're *really* doing something.

You're doing what you absolutely want, and wanting what you do, absolutely.

So you think, *"There is no place else I'd rather be—no other place and no other time. I completely will to be right here right now."*

You see I think that's a free will.

For a will that's entirely free, time stops... *"chronos is no more."*

It's eternity now. It's Heaven on earth. It's absolute Joy.

And so, of course, we try to choose it; we take it; we seize hold of it...

And then what happens? We kill it... and it vanishes.

We think, *"Look, I'm dancing!"* And we trip.

"Look at me, I'm walking on water!" And we sink.

Well anyway, a truly free will must be Heaven...

A truly free will is entirely unrestrained, unrepressed, and undetermined...

A truly free will, is not determined by anything and determines everything.

So the truly free will is the undetermined determiner.

It's the Uncaused Cause.

It's the Uncreated Creator.

In one of her books, Shirley MacLaine writes about actualizing free will, one afternoon in a hotel room. She writes:

"If I created my own reality... I had created everything I saw, heard, touched, smelled, tasted; everything I loved, hated, revered, abhorred; everything I responded to or that responded to me. Then, I created everything I knew. I was therefore responsible for all there was in my reality. If that was true, then I was everything... I was my own universe. Did that also mean I had created God...? A chilling wave of loneliness rippled through me... Was this what was meant by the statement I AM THAT I AM?"

So, do you want free will?

You might be thinking *"Well, it sounded like Heaven for a bit there, Peter, but now I'm worried that we're talking about Hell."*

Yeah... we are.

Free will is *truly* the greatest thing that you could ever imagine.

And yet, those who *seize hold* of Free Will seem to suffer the greatest bondage.

It's often kings that are truly slaves...

And it's slaves that are secretly kings.

In 1943, out of all the people in the world, which person had a will *least* restrained by any other will? And who in turn, restrained all other wills?

Well, wouldn't that have been Adolph Hitler?

Who would it be today? Vladimir Putin or Donald Trump . . . ?

Fortunately, for Donald's soul², we have a system that limits power.

Free will is power . . . and seizing power will make you miserable.

Every mother knows this: the spoiled child is the miserable child. It's the child whose will is left unrestrained that sinks into despair. That child wills whatever they want, and loses the ability to want what they will. It's like they seize hold of the Good, but the moment they do, the good dies... and then, in misery they try again, and again, and again . . . trapped in a hell of their own making until someone breaks their will and the walls of their kingdom come tumbling down.

After watching *Charlottes Web*, my friend Cathy was worried about her daughter, for, at the end of the movie, Charlotte the spider dies giving birth to her babies. Her little girl looked up and said, *"Those babies were born and their mommy was dead. Do you know what that means?"* Cathy looked at her little girl with compassion . . . *"It means they can do whatever they want!"*

We understand why that idea is enticing.

But what if the thing that all babies most want is their mommy?

I'm just pointing out that Free Will is the very definition of Heaven...

But when we seize hold of it, as if it were solely ours, it feels like hell.

² We have a system, which attempts to limit power, for we know that absolute power corrupts absolutely. Absolute freedom of will is absolute power. And absolute Power is God. Does God corrupt absolutely? I don't think so. And yet, making yourself God is the very definition of corruption.

People that claim to possess free will, well they often seem to end up in Hell.

But people that don't have free will—aren't really people.

Maybe we're not really people . . . quite yet?

Maybe we're not really persons, but just dreaming of being persons one day . . .

The Seventh Day, when it is finished, and everything is Good . . . including us.

Scripture says that Jesus is “the firstborn from the dead,” and “the firstborn of all creation.” That would imply that you're not actually born until you die, and you're not entirely created, until that day. Paul writes “*Awake oh sleeper and rise from the dead and Christ will give you Light.*” We're asleep in the dream of our own sovereignty—the dream of our own free will.

Well anyway, as I was saying—the Ark is Free Will and so of course, every one, especially the Nazis, want to possess the Ark.

The Army that carries the Ark is invincible...

The question is, “What Army can carry the Ark?”

Clip from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*

[Two Nazi soldiers pick up the Ark of the Covenant. Indiana Jones and Marion are tied up and watch from a distance. The scene changes: Belloq, the main antagonist anxiously moves towards the Ark. Powerful light emits from the Ark turning into fire and then consuming Belloq. Fire then shoots from his eyes and pierces nearby Nazi soldiers consuming them as they fall to the ground. Fire, light, and power continue to flow out of the Ark and then shoot into the sky and can be seen from miles away.]

See? This is the problem with the Ark . . .

It has a mind of its own.

It has a will of its own.

It does what it wills and wills what it does.

It is free will... absolute free will.

Steven Spielberg actually got that scene right out of the Bible.

In 1 Samuel, Philistines capture the Ark but can't handle the ark so they send it back to Israel and some Israelites look into the ark. They look at the law, without its covering, and it kills them, all seventy of them.

However, unlike the movie, the Glory wasn't in the Ark.

The law is in the Ark, the Glory would rest on top of the Ark... the Glory is alive.

In 2 Samuel, David attempts to bring the Ark into Jerusalem on a cart. When the cart hits

a bump, a fellow named Uzzah reaches out his hand to save the Ark and the Ark smites Uzzah: you don't save the Ark, the Ark saves you.

Well, David loves the Ark, but he's terrified of the Ark . . .
And so He attempts to build a container for the Ark—a temple of stone.

In the wilderness, God had the Israelites keep the Ark in this elaborate tent called the tabernacle—the point was that it was mobile. That was important, for the Word of the Lord, would appear in a pillar of fire and cloud on top of the Ark, issue judgment, and give Israel direction to the Promised Land. It was the Way, the Truth, and the Life . . .
And yet, even the Israelites couldn't endure its presence . . . let alone, the Nazis.

Well, understandably David wants to build the Ark a stone container because a tabernacle—a tent is just too flimsy. In 2 Samuel 7, the Word of the Lord rebukes David for wanting to build Him a stone house; He declares that He wants to move with His people. But then, He promises David that a son of David would build Him a house.

Of course, they all thought that was Solomon.
But that home would be destroyed in 587 BC.

About six hundred years later, after it was destroyed, another son of David, stood by the rebuilt temple, minus the ark, which had been lost when the temple was destroyed. He stood by the stone temple and said, *“Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up... and he spoke of the temple of his body.”*

Well, the Ark is absolute free will . . . and so far we've spoken of what it does:

It judges, it directs, it can move mountains...

That's what it *does*.

But even more fascinating is what it *is*. It's a coffin.

In Hebrew *“awrone,”* which comes from *“awraw,”* which means to pluck or to pick, ... like you might pick fruit from a tree. And that makes sense: you pick the fruit and the fruit dies.

The first place that the word appears, in the Bible, is in the last verse of Genesis: it's Genesis 50:26, when Joseph makes the children of Israel promise to put his bones in an *awrone*, and one day carry them back to Israel. Joseph is, perhaps, the most vivid and detailed picture of Jesus in all the Old Testament: the bones of Jesus in a box is quite a picture.

The next place *awrone* appears is in Exodus, when God commands Moses to have Israel build an *awrone*, a coffin, for the law. They are to build it of *“ates”* which is translated, tree, wood, gallows, or even, by the 1st century... cross.³ They are to build it of *“shittim ates,”* which can be translated *“scourging tree or piercing tree.”*

³ Exodus 25:10 “Shittim wood.” In Hebrew, the word Shittim is derived from a word that means “to pierce or scourge.” It's a scourging tree. The term “Shittim wood or tree” occurs twenty-nine times in the Old Testament. Twenty-eight of those times it refers to the material of which the Ark and Tabernacle are to be

Do you suppose that the law died?

What is the law? Isn't it the knowledge of Good and evil?

Perhaps the Good died, and taking the life of the Good, is the very essence of evil?

Apparently, at one point, the Good hung on a tree like fruit.

And somehow we picked it, and it must've died.

Adam, humanity—*ha adam*, took knowledge of Good and evil... and everything died.

Well, Moses was instructed to put the law in the Ark.

And then on top of the Ark, to construct an "atonement seat" or "Mercy seat."

And on both sides of the seat, cherubim, like the two cherubim that guarded the way to the tree of Life.

The Mercy Seat was also the throne of God and Judgment of God.

The Word of God, and Glory of God, would manifest between the cherubim on top of the Mercy Seat and issue the Judgment of God.

Understand? The Judgment of God is the Will of God, and the Will of God is Free . . .

That means God's will is stronger than your will.

And God's Will is Law covered in Mercy.

When James wrote, "*Mercy triumphs* (literally "boasts" or "rejoices") *over judgment*," He must have been picturing the Ark of the Covenant. It doesn't mean that Mercy opposes Judgment, but that mercy is the full revelation of judgment. The Glory is on top of the Ark... the coffin...As if it died and rose from the dead.

When John looks to the throne of God and sees a lamb standing *as if* He'd been slain, He's looking at the top of the Ark.

He's looking at the ultimate revelation of the Will of God.

He's looking at Jesus—Now... Hold that thought...

And let's review:

The Ark of God is the Revelation of the Judgment of God.

The Judgment of God is the Will of God.

The Will of God is absolutely Free.

It is Free Will... It's not just furniture.

So seven seals are opened, seven trumpets sound...

The walls of this world crumble . . .

The destroyers of the earth are destroyed . . .

The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our God . . .

This is the reason creation was subjected to futility . . .

This is the reason all people were consigned to disobedience . . .

constructed. And once it used in a prophetic word as to how God will turn the wilderness into a garden (Is. 41:19). Reference Strongs Exhaustive Concordance #H7848 and H7850.

John looks and He sees the Ark of God . . . in the temple.

What temple is He talking about? Us! Us! Us!
What's the Glory of God?

That He makes people like paper dolls and then burns them with fire?

OR

That He makes people like paper dolls and breathes His fire into their souls.

I mean He gives them His own will, His free will, His own heart from His own bosom.

Such that He could actually say,



"Would *you* dance with me?"

And

they would freely reply:

"Why yes! It is my greatest desire to dance with you forever, and ever, and ever, my Love!"

"The Glory of God is man fully alive," wrote Iranaeus in the 2nd Century.

The Glory of God is Humanity in His Own Image.

The Glory of God is His own free will at home in our hearts—His temple.

Jesus said, *He who conquers will sit on my throne.*

That means God's Will, will be your will, and your will will be God's Will.

God's Law will be living and at home in your heart.

You will say to the mountain move and it will move.

You will never think, *"I wish I was someplace else or some time else."*

You will create reality . . . and yet, you will never be alone.

You will, will what you want, and always want what you will.

You will constantly choose the Good in absolute freedom—freedom that is Life.

It will be better than anything you can currently even imagine.

And this is the plan for the fullness of time.

In other words, you are predestined . . . for free will.

John sees the Ark of God, in the temple of God, and God's temple is you.

So how did it get there? And do we have it now?

Do we have free will?

Once again, let's review:

God's will is free and God is Free Will.

God is what He wills and He wills what He is... He is undivided and free. He is One.

The Biblical word for "free will," is *Yahweh*, I am that I am, God.

God is free will and He is making us in His image.

I think that's the Gospel! That's Good News!

The Free Will of God is also the Word of God that creates all things, including you.

The Word of God is Jesus and Jesus is the Word of God.

Jesus is the Slaughtered Lamb standing on the throne on top of the Ark.

Jesus is God's will. Jesus is Free Will.

Now, ask yourself the question again:

"Do I have free will?" Do you?

If so, How did you get this free will?

1. Did you conquer it?

Did you capture it, scourge it, and nail it to a piece of wood?

If so, you must be terribly proud, and lonely, and dead, and actually not free at all...
but only pretending to be free... only dreaming of freedom.

And not really knowing what the Good is because you killed it.

2. Did you capture it... or did you receive it as a gift?

If you did, you must be terribly grateful for this gift, and just lost in love for the One
Who gave it . . . you must be fully alive, and constantly at peace with all things, for all
things have become new. Anyone in Christ is a new creation the old has passed
away! "Behold," says Paul, all things are new!

So, Did you conquer it, or did it conquer you?

Did you conquer Jesus, or did Jesus conquer you?

If you're like me you kind of have to answer: well both.

I think I sinned and became a slave...

But when I believed God's Grace, I began to be free...

I conquered Jesus and then, [Peter looks at the cross] Jesus conquered me...

That's the story of me, but not only me but of all Humanity—*ha adam*.

We *took* His life on the tree in the garden... and everything died... it was Hell... it's
called sin. And yet, He forgave His life on the tree . . . we received it . . . and everything
lived . . . it's called Grace.

We're saved by Grace, and Grace is the Free Will of God.

We're saved by Grace and created by Grace.

And it's all according to plan.

I think the fruit on the tree in the middle of the garden is Jesus.

He is *the Good* in flesh. He is *the Life*. And He is *the will of God*—Free Will.

Adam was free, but not free to choose the Good because he didn't know what the Good was. He didn't have the knowledge of Good and evil.

Once he took knowledge of the Good—the life of the Good, he began to know evil, but he could no longer choose the Good. Why? He was in bondage to evil. He was divided. And He just crucified the Good.

On the cross, God revealed that what we took, He had always given. It was *for-given*. The Good is Grace, which is the Free Will of God. The Will of God is Jesus Christ crucified and risen from the dead.

When we finally, and fully, believe that "It is finished," we will know the Good and want the Good, we will manifest the Good, which is to *be* the Good; it is eternal Life. We will be the image of God. We will know good and evil and we will live. In other words, we will be in the very image of God.

So, at the cross, God Freely Willed to surrender His Good Will to our bad will in time, in order that we might surrender our bad will to His Good will for all eternity. And this is the Glory and Power of God. God is Love!

Free will is Love, and Love is making you in His own image. To the degree that you're proud of love, as if you thought you were the author of love, you are the evil dead in bondage to sin. To the degree that you're grateful for love, as if love were the author of you, you're alive and the temple of the living God.

Actually, I think the Ark is in the temple right now... (maybe it always has been). One day, the last trumpet will sound, you will wake from the dream of your own sovereignty, the illusion that you're in charge. The walls of your world will come tumbling down, this old tent in which you think you live will dissolve and you will see it.

The Ark is in the Temple—the temple of the living God, which is you. Sometimes, you can begin to see it, even here, and even now.

"...Seven, eight, nine - you! Step out!" The Nazi guard yelled at the young Romanian woman. The commandant had ordered every tenth prisoner executed as punishment for two women's escape the night before.

"Please have mercy on me! I have a child. I'm a mother," the tenth woman pleaded. Mary Skotsobaugh stood next in line.

In her heart, Mary heard a voice, *"Step forward and say you want to die in her place."* She replied to the inner voice, *"Why? She is not a Christian. She is a Jewish Communist. When the Nazis are overthrown and the Communists come to power, they will be as bad as the Nazis."*

The voice said, *"On a day like this I died, not for the good ones, but for the bad ones, for sinners."*

Mary then stepped forward saying, *"I wish to die in her place."*

Later on, Mary went to the ovens, she told her executioners, *"When God took his people out of slavery in Egypt, it is written that he went before them in a column of fire, (above the Ark). I pray that when my body burns it would be a column of fire that shows you the way to God."*

It was, and it still is: The Army that carries the Ark is invincible.
It looks weak in this world, and yet, it's stronger than all this world.

The kingdom of the Nazis is long gone and the Kingdom of God cannot be stopped.
Mary willed what she willed, although everything tried to stop her—her will was Free...
and now her will has joined a symphony of wills all in harmony with God's Will, as One Will—it is the Kingdom of Heaven, the Great Dance. And it's free.

And one last thing:

On earth, Mary gave birth to the Life that is God.

Mary saved the life of that young Mother, but Mary is the Mother of Our Lord.

Rev. 11:19 *"The Ark of the Covenant was seen within the temple in heaven..."*

Next verse, Revelation 12:1-2a *"And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant..."*

When we surrender to the Will of God, we give birth to the Will of God.

Happy Mother's Day, Bride of Christ and Mother of the Living God.

Communion

This is the Will of God.

He took bread and He broke it saying this is my body given to you.

And He took the cup saying, this is the covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it.

So, actually, this sermon is super simple.

This is the Ark [Peter points to the communion table] and you are the temple.

This is Free Will [Peter points to the communion table] and you are His Body, the Bride of Christ, and even His Mother.

What do every mother and father want?

A child who loves them in freedom.

A child with free will—that knows that they've been *given* that free will.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank you. Not only for what you do but for who you are. You are the Free Will of God and you are Love in flesh, loving us constantly. Thank you, Lord God, for this glimpse of the Judgment Seat, the Throne. When I see you, I have to confess that I sometimes think that I am responsible for you, that I am responsible for Free Will. Lord God, that's why I get proud; that's why I get jealous; that's why I compete...

I thank you for the Good News. I am not responsible for Free Will. Free Will is responsible for me. When I see that I begin to love you, myself, and my neighbor. I just can't wait for that day when I am finally *fully* free with you and everyone in this room—in an entirely new creation. In Jesus' name, we thank you. Amen.

Benediction

Today was the introduction to the Mother's Day sermon. So, you need to come back next week for the Mother's Day sermon about Revelation 12. But for now, just believe the Gospel. Amen.

Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio or video version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.