

Is Free Will a reality?

Dr Michael Jarvis



Debates about Free Will used to be heard mainly within theological seminaries but in recent times scientific discoveries are contributing to our understanding of this important question.

If God has laid out details of how mankind should behave, such as in the Ten Commandments, if we have Free Will then we can be held responsible for keeping or not keeping these commandments.

However, if we do not have Free Will then we can ask if it is just for God to judge us when we fall short of his standards?

Recently the BBC presented a documentary on Free Will and outlined why the presenters concluded that we DO NOT have Free Will. I will give extracts from the commentary and then explain why I believe they came to the wrong conclusion about Free Will.

The BBC Documentary was called 'Do we have Free Will?'

The BBC presentation includes the following statements:
I have highlighted some significant words.

The laws of physics **as we understand them today** suggest that the future is predestined and therefore there cannot be any such thing as free will.

The laws of physics suggest that if something happens it must be caused by something before it and so we can trace all the way back to the Big Bang creation through the laws of physics – cause and effect.

It is suggested that our choices in life are in some way fated to happen. **This is determinism.** Our brains are subjected to the laws of physics so, in a deterministic universe, where one thing follows the other, when we think we're making free choices it's just the laws of physics playing themselves out.

Our brains are so complex that we can never predict in advance what someone is going to do or even what we ourselves are going to do. **So we have the illusion of free will.**

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This brings us to the Block Universe theory. It arose from Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity, where he said that time and space have to be unified, You can't talk about three dimensional space and one dimensional time, as though they are separate things. They're part of one four dimensional space-time.

The Block Universe says that it's not just the present time that exists. In the Block Universe all times co-exist. They're just different 'slices' of the loaf. There is no universal present moment. **There can only ever be one outcome.**

But what if the future already exists? In that case the choices we make are never truly free.

The BBC commentary then adds: 'We do know that the Block Universe is more than just a theoretical idea. **This is the way things really are.**

But, they add, physics currently has two main theories to describe reality. Einstein's Theory of Relativity is used to describe events at large and small scales while Quantum Mechanics describes events only at very small scales and these two realities seem hard to harmonise.

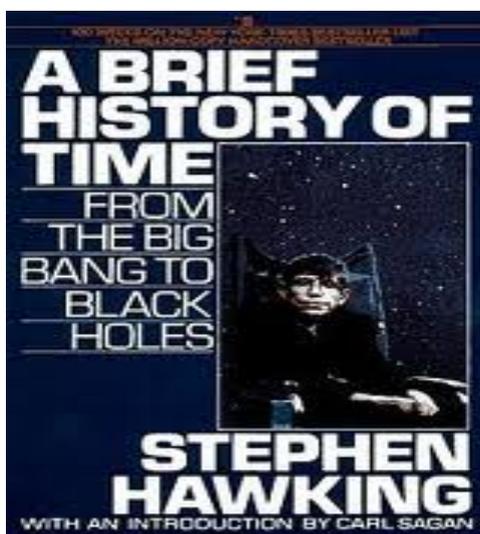
Quantum theory predicts the probability of outcomes. The commentary accepts that Quantum realities seem to challenge determinism. **They promote indeterminism** and this does support the presence of free will.

So, a fundamental problem is that both theories work well at describing their own events at their scale of detail but not at the other scale of detail.

However, both theories do agree on one thing, that all our choices, freely willed or not, will echo throughout space for all time.

How can we better understand these realities and theories?

Our universe originated from a Timeless Dimension



The famous late physicist Stephen Hawking wrote his bestselling book 'A brief history of time', in which he summarised our current understanding of the origin of the universe. Our universe that is locked into time.

We speak of the 'Arrow of Time'. We move from our past, through our present and into our future. According to Einstein, space and time started at the Big Bang Creation event.

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This suggests that our universe originated from a Timeless Dimension of reality. **This also suggests that our universe exists within a greater reality from which it originated.**

For wider discussion around the Timeless Dimension see my article:

[*Scientific evidence for a Timeless Dimension of reality*](#)

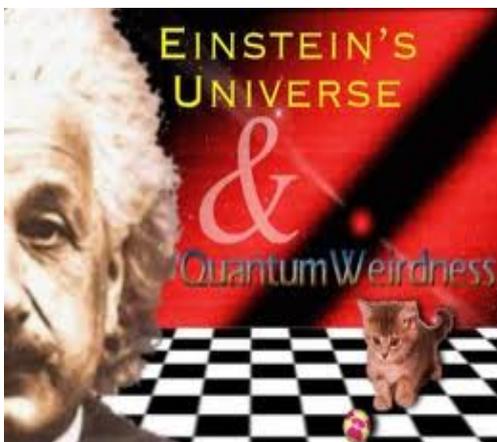
That Timeless Dimension of reality contains a manifestation of energy that is involved with holding our universe together. This reality is being revealed by the science of Quantum Mechanics. All that we can see in our time-bound universe is built up from energy interactions within microscopic quantum realities.

In other words, our visible time-bound universe is built up from and held together by Quantum energy that behaves as if it operates outside of the limitations of time. It is characterised by particles of energy existing in more than one place at the same time and by instantaneous interactions across vast distances.

Scientists studying these quantum realities have coined new terminology such as 'entanglement' and 'superposition'. We cannot detect where a particle of energy is until we measure it with one of our time-bound instruments. This freezes the multitude of probabilities into time, thus extracting one reality from the Timeless Dimension multitude of co-existing realities.

For further discussion see my article: [*Mysterious Energy Power House of our Universe*](#).

Another conclusion from studies of Quantum Mechanics is that whatever happens in our universe is still happening for ever, because all activity is enabled and controlled by 'laws' operating within the Timeless Dimension.

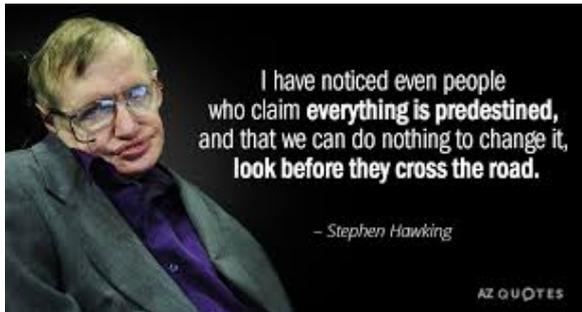


In other words, it is not surprising that the BBC documentary could state that there is agreement on at least one thing between the universe described by Einstein's formulas and those derived from Quantum Mechanics. **Both theories and on-going observations agree on one thing, that all our choices, freely willed or not, will echo throughout space for all time.**

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Implications for Free Will

Do we conclude from this that our futures are already decided? The Block Universe theory suggests that because our universe is derived from and is held together by a Timeless Dimension, this means that the Past, Present and Future are all existing already, outside of time!



Stephen Hawking spoke about how denying the existence of Free Will is hard for us to accept.

We do make decisions and choices all the time. We sometimes realise that our choices are influenced by past events and other inputs into our lives.

However, the BBC Documentary argues that the future cannot be changed and so our individual choices are in fact not Free Will choices. They may seem to be freely made but that is because we cannot see the larger picture.

What is wrong with the BBC documentary conclusions?

The BBC documentary emphasises that within the Block Universe all events experienced in our universe, between the Big Bang origin of our universe and its final theoretical end, all exist within a Timeless Dimension and so our Past, Present and Future all exist NOW.

However, observations within Quantum Mechanics suggest that whatever happens within the quantum energy realities from which our universe is made, are known instantaneously throughout the universe. **This has to mean that the future is constantly being altered by all the NOW events.** These NOW events, such as our choices, are instantly known throughout the timeless quantum reality.

Yes, the future is already known if looked at from outside of time but that 'known future' is in fact a dynamic reality that is constantly and instantaneously changing due to events on earth within time and due to Free Will choices made by us creatures of time.

How does this look to an Intelligence existing outside of time?

We can ask what it is like to exist within a Timeless Dimension. **The Bible tells us that God exists within this reality.** This does not have to mean that time does not exist within a Timeless Dimension. It is more probable that God is independent from time but can interact with any instant within our time-bound universe instantaneously.

God can move instantaneously into our past, our present and our future. He revealed himself to Moses as the **I AM**, the ever present reality (Exodus 3:14). From this position of independence from the restrictions of time, God can look into our futures.

This brings us to revelations given to the Apostle Paul. He wrote: *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purposes. **For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*** (Romans 8: 28-30.)

To understand words like these in the context of the Block Universe and the Timeless Dimension, we can suggest that God looks into each of our futures and can see in advance how we will choose when given opportunities to choose. If he can see in advance how we will choose if presented with choices between right and wrong, this tells him how we will choose (free will choice) if presented with revelations about God revealed through Jesus Christ.

If such foreknowledge shows that you or I will be seeking for meaning to life and seeking for God then he organises events in our lives so that we will be given those opportunities to choose correctly. *Those he foreknew he also predestined and those he predestined he also called.*

According to these revelations, mankind have been given Free Will. Our choices are influenced by inputs around us but we nevertheless can choose between options.

In other words, the fact that God operates within the Timeless Dimension does not mean that time does not exist in that dimension. It can mean that God is independent from the limitations of time and can interact instantly with any event within our Arrow of Time. With his vast knowledge he can see in advance how we will exert our Free Will. When God knows that our Free Will choices will lead us to seek for him and his kingdom then he brings situations into our lives that will enable us to make the choices that direct us to become part of his great plans for earth, the universe and his Everlasting Kingdom.

How do our minds interact with the Timeless Dimension?

We may ask how it is possible that our thoughts and actions can exist for ever. I expand upon this in my article:

[The mystery of consciousness.](#)

The more we study the human brain and consciousness the more amazing and mysterious it becomes. Science is still far from understanding how our brains create consciousness.

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Below is an extract from my article. You can open the whole article by clicking on the above link (The mystery of consciousness).

Can our brains be our link to the Timeless Dimension?

Einstein shook the world with his theories of Relativity, and discoveries since then have confirmed its conclusions. One conclusion was that matter can never be accelerated to the speed of light. This speed is the boundary between time and timelessness. As you (matter) approach that speed you and all matter (mass) gets heavier and heavier and at the speed of light you would become infinitely heavy! At the speed of light time ceases to exist!



We face the reality that we are made from the matter of this universe and so cannot reach a state of timelessness by accelerating to the speed of light, namely 299,792,458 meters each second! Matter seems doomed to remain locked into time.

However, does consciousness or mind have mass?

Our consciousness is linked to the functioning of our brains and the electrical impulses that rush back and forth.

However, although our brains are made of matter and have mass, consciousness and thought seem to be in a form of associated energy without mass.

If our consciousness and thoughts are a form of associated energy without mass then this raises the possibility that our minds are in some mysterious way in contact with the Timeless Dimension that is being revealed through studies of quantum mechanics.



If our minds depend in some way upon the Timeless Dimension in order to create consciousness, this may help us understand why some scientists are saying that our brains seem to function in similar ways to sub-atomic realities being studied by Quantum physicists.

This might also help explain some of the revelations given to us in the Bible. For instance:

1. Prayer can be the communication of human minds with the Mind of God; a sort of 'cosmic telepathy'.
2. Jesus said that all our words and actions are recorded and will one day be revealed. Do we all have a 'quantum book' existing in the Timeless Dimension? The study of quantum physics suggests that all events are known instantaneously within this mysterious world of timeless energy, from which our time-locked universe originated and by which it is held together. It is therefore possible that our thoughts are continually being stored within the Timeless Dimension.



To my mind these possibilities and mysteries relating to the human brain lead me to a renewed amazement and awe of our Creator and to wonder what amazing things are waiting for me, when one day I am released from the limitations of time and enter into the Timeless Dimension of reality.

As a Christian, I realise more than ever before the importance of remembering that our lives are actually a testing and training ground for far greater things that await us in the Timeless Dimension of reality.

We do have Free Wills and we can ask God to help us make the right choices during the few years that we are locked into the Arrow of Time.

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