

Systematic Theology

A study of the major doctrines of Scripture

Topic 2 - The Doctrine of God

Lesson 37 - The Attributes of God: Will

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God's Will

- God's will is His perfect determination and sovereign ordination of all things, pertaining to both Himself, His decrees, His actions, and to His creation (including the events of history and the thoughts and actions of people), all unto the magnification of His utmost glory. - MacArthur, pg. 185
- God's will is that attribute of God whereby He approves and determines to bring about every action necessary for the existence and activity of Himself and all creation. - Grudem, pg. 211
- God's will is the final or ultimate reason for everything that happens.
- Ephesians 1:11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him **who works all things according to the counsel of His will**

God's Will

- All things were created according to and by God's will.
- Revelation 4:11 "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."
- All human government comes to power or declines according to God's will.
- Daniel 4:32 ...the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.
- Romans 13:1 For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

God's Will

- All of the events connected with the death of Christ were according to God's will.
- Acts 4:27 “For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.”
- Sometimes it is God's will that Christians suffer.
- 1 Peter 3:17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.
- 1 Peter 4:19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.
- Philippians 1:29 For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.

God's Will

- Every event in our daily life is subject to God's will.
- James 4:13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; 14 whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. 15 Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."

Everything depends upon the will of God

- Creation and preservation - Psa. 135:6; Jer. 18:6; Rev. 4:11
- Government - Prov. 21:1; Dan. 4:17, 25, 32, 35
- Election and Reprobation - Rom. 9:15-16, 18; Eph. 1:11-12
- Suffering of Christ - Luke 22:42; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28
- Regeneration - John 1:13; James 1:18
- Sanctification - Phil. 2:13
- Suffering - 1 Peter 3:17
- Man's life and destiny - Isa. 45:9; Acts 18:21; Rom. 15:32; James 4:15
- Even the smallest things - Matt. 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will.

God's Will is sovereignly independent over everything outside Himself

- He acts according to His own good pleasure - Psa. 115:3; Prov. 21:1; Dan. 4:35
- He does not give an account to anyone - Job 33:13; Isa. 46:10; Mat. 20:15
- He is the Potter, His creation is the clay - Job 10:9; 33:6; Isa. 29:16; Jer. 18:1-10; Rom. 9:19-24
- The nations are less than nothing before Him - Isa. 40:15-17
- No one can prevent Him from doing as He pleases - Job 9:2-13; 11:10; Isa. 10:15; Dan. 4:35
- He shows mercy or hardens solely according to His will - Rom. 9:15-18
- The Holy Spirit gives gifts according to His will - 1 Cor. 12:11
- Man does not have the right to demand that God express His will in particular ways - Matt. 20:13-16; Rom. 9:20-21

Are there contradictions in the will of God?

- God wills what man should do, but God also wills what man does. (He wills man to obey yet hardens his heart not to obey).
- God wills for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, then prevents Abraham from offering Isaac.
- God wills for Hezekiah to die then extends his life 15 years.
- God wills for the righteous to not be condemned yet Christ was condemned according to His will.
- God hates sin, yet ordains its existence.
- The key in understanding the difference between God's secret will (or decretive will), and His revealed will (or preceptive will).

Secret Will and Revealed Will

- Deut. 29:29 “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”
- God’s secret will is His good pleasure, His eternal, unchangeable counsel or decree in which He has foreordained all things. This does not mean that He is the immediate cause of all things but that all things exist or occur by His eternal, sovereign decree.
- His will makes things certain, but He does not coerce His creatures to do anything. He ordains even the free choices of men.

Secret Will and Revealed Will

- Second London Baptist Confession of Faith - Chapter 3. God's Decree.
- God has decreed in Himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things which shall ever come to pass. Yet in such a way that God is neither the author of sin nor does He have fellowship with any in the committing of sins, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established. In all this God's wisdom is displayed, disposing all things, and also His power and faithfulness in accomplishing His decree.