

The Ultimate Will of God

Understanding God's Will for Our Lives

Lecture X

September 23, 2020

Welcome Back to Bible study!!! We left off our inspiring study focusing on three aspects of God's will:

1. **The Intentional Will of God:** The Intentional Will of God means the way in which God pours himself out in goodness, such as the true father longs to do for his son and daughter.
2. **The Circumstantial Will of God:** The Circumstantial Will of God, that is how evil circumstances may momentarily counter God's ideal purposes "There is an intentional purpose of God for every person's life...but because of human folly and sin...because (our) free will creates circumstances of evil that cut across God's plans...because our oneness with the great human family means that the evil among other members of it may create circumstances which disturb God's intention for us.
3. **The Permissive Will of God.** Why does God allow and permit somethings to happen."

We further examined theodicy, which is an attempt to justify the goodness of God in the face of the manifold evil present in the world. Further, theodicy is an attempt to reconcile the belief in a loving and powerful God with the suffering in our world. We espouse that God is all-good, and yet we struggle to understand why God allows evil to exist in the world.

We discussed the various aspects of the Permissive Will such as, the problem of theodicy and the concept of anthropodicy, which addresses man's inhumanity to man or the horrible things we do to each other.

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Then we explored the ACTS of God. This pertains to natural disasters such as hurricanes, tsunamis, tidal waves, earthquakes, tornadoes, and etcetera.

Finally, we decoded the acronym WIGIAT: Where Is God in All This.

We will now turn our attention to **the Ultimate Will of God**. When we use the phrase God's Ultimate Will – this idea refers to how God achieves His ends, given man's choices, be they good or bad. “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28). This means He can ultimately get His good in spite of man's bad. To put it another way, God's Ultimate Will is the goal which He reaches, not only in spite of all man may do, but even using man's evil to further his own plan.

There is a sentence at the end of the book of Job which summarizes the message of this section: “I know that thou canst do all things, and that no purpose of thine can be restrained” (Job 42:2) — or, as Moffatt translates it, “Nothing is too hard for thee.” There are also some companion Scriptures and modern translations that we will make use of to help us better understand God's Ultimate Will:

- **Job 42:2** - (Contemporary English Version [CEV], Holman Christian Standard Bible [HCSB], The Message Version [MSG], Easy-to-Read Version [ERV]);
- **Philippians 1:6, Isaiah 46:9-11** - (The Voice, ERV);
- **Romans 8:28** - (ERV).

As we begin our discussion on God's Ultimate Will let's examine how Laird understands the omnipotence of God operating in his Ultimate Will. Laird

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states, “When we say, that God is omnipotent, we do not mean that nothing can happen unless it is God’s Will (= intention). We mean that nothing can happen which can finally defeat him.” Laird goes on to say, “What is meant by the omnipotence of God is that He will reach at last his ultimate goal, that nothing of value will be lost in the process, however man may divert and dam up the stream of purpose nearest him, and that God — if he cannot use men as his agents — will, though with great pain to himself and to themselves, use them as his instruments.” “I know that thou canst do all things, and that no purpose of thine can be restrained.”

To advance her claim Laird uses the illustration of the children and the damned stream. Very little children can divert the stream and get great fun out of damming it up with stones and earth. But not one of them ever succeeds in preventing the water from reaching the river at last. This is a great illustration of God’s Ultimate Will. We are assured that His will can never be thwarted.

There is also the continuous use of the analogy of God using the cross to bring about the intended salvation of Mankind in spite of the evil circumstances of mankind. While I agree with Laird on several points, I tend to differ with her and Weatherhead in that I feel they give too much power to man’s involvement in the salvation process. Further, I am concerned about this notion of God limiting his power to allow man to exercise free will.

Additionally, I feel more emphasis on the Garden of Eden would have been beneficial to this study as it relates to what God intended for mankind in the Garden, and how it was restored through Jesus (the second Adam.) My contention is that based on the scriptural concepts of God’s Omnipotence and God’s sovereignty. God does not need man’s help in bringing his goals to pass.

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Let's examine the Scriptures to push my argument. There are some helpful terms we should consider in our discussion on the Ultimate Will of God: God's Decretive Will, and God's Sovereign Will. When we speak of God's Decretive Will we mean: The Decretive Will of God is where God decrees what definitely will happen. God's Decretive Will is sometimes described as the sovereign, efficacious will by which God brings to pass whatever He pleases by His divine decree. An example of this may be seen in God's work of creation. When God said, "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3), He issued a divine imperative. He exercised His sovereign, efficacious will. When He did so, it was impossible for the light not to appear. It appeared by the sheer necessity of consequence.

The Decretive Will can have no other effect, no other consequence than what God sovereignly commands. He did not request the light to shine. Neither did He coax, cajole, or woo it into existence. It was a matter of absolute authority and power. No creature enjoys this power of will. No man's will is that efficacious. Men issue decrees and then hope they will bring about their desired effects. God alone can decree with the necessity of consequence.

In regards to God's Sovereign Will we mean: that God is the supreme authority and all things are under His control. God is the "sovereign Lord of all by an incontestable right as the creator . . . owner and possessor of heaven and earth." Sovereignty is an Attribute of God based upon the premise that God as the creator of heaven and earth has absolute right and full authority to do or allow whatever He desires. God make this very statement in (Isaiah 46:5-11):

1. The notions of God's Omnipotence = all powerful; the quality of having unlimited or very great power. (Job 42:2)

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2. The notion of God's Omniscience: The state of knowing everything, all knowing, all wise. (Isaiah 46:9-11; Psalm 139)
3. The notion of God's Omnipresence; the quality of God being present everywhere at the same time. (Ezekiel 48:35) Jehovah-Shammah: God who is there. (Psalm 139)
4. Emmanuel: Literally means God is with us. Not simply present but actively involved in our lives and life's situations. (Genesis 39:2, Isaiah 7:14)
5. Omni-Benevolence of God chesed in common terms we have the English word benevolence the quality of well meaning; kindness when it relates to human beings, but when it relates to God there is a greater meaning, we have the word Omni benevolence; perfect or unlimited goodness; (John 3:16)

In conclusion, we mentioned in the beginning of the study, that we would make use of some biblical characters whose lives reflect some aspects of these wills of God while others lives will reflect all three. Laird was wise in choosing Joseph, because there is no greater example of all the wills of God operating in an individual's life than Joseph's. Let's review Joseph's story:

In Genesis 37-50:20, the story is told of Joseph, favored son of Jacob, who is sold by his jealous brothers to slave traders. Joseph is sold again to Potiphar, captain of Pharaoh's guard. Joseph distinguishes himself as a responsible servant. Joseph is wrongly accused and imprisoned for trying to assault his master's wife while in prison. Joseph interprets the dreams of some fellow prisoners. After one of the prisoners returns to work for the Pharaoh he remembers Joseph when the Pharaoh has some unexplainable dreams. Joseph is called upon to interpret them. Joseph is made a chief officer over the land. When famine comes, Joseph is able to save his family from starvation. Joseph comes to see that being

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sold into slavery has allowed him to preserve a remnant of his people and thus further God's purposes despite the evil done to him by his brothers, and Potiphar's wife. (Genesis 50:20)

Let us always remember God's Ultimate Will is the goal which God reaches, not only in spite of all we may do, but even through redeeming evil to further the divine plan.

Joseph had a quiet confidence that he was in God's will, and that the Lord had placed him in Egypt for a purpose. The following poem expresses the need for all believers to find security and confidence in the Will of God. (We will reference it again at other points in our study.)

The Will of God will never take you:

- Where the **Grace of God** cannot keep you.
- Where the **arms of God** cannot support you.
- Where **riches of God** cannot supply your needs.
- Where the **power of God** cannot endow you.

The Will of God will never take you:

- Where the **spirit of God** cannot work through you.
- Where the **wisdom Of God** cannot teach you.
- Where the **army of God** cannot protect you.
- Where the **hands of God** cannot mold you.

The Will of GOD will never take you:

- Where the **LOVE of GOD** cannot enfold you.
- Where the **Mercies of GOD** cannot sustain you.
- Where the **Peace of GOD** cannot calm your fears.
- Where the **Authority of GOD** cannot over rule you.

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The Will of GOD will never take you:

- Where the **Comfort of GOD** cannot dry your tears.
 - Where the **Word of GOD** cannot feed you.
 - Where the **Miracles of GOD** cannot be done for you.
 - Where the **Omnipresence of GOD** cannot find you.
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Assignment for Wednesday, September 30, 2020:

The Will of God Workbook by Rebecca Laird.

- 1. Read: Chapter Three – The Ultimate Will of God**
- 2. Answer questions for:**
 - **Case Study #1 – Page 50**
 - **Case Study #2 – Page 51**
 - **Case Study #3 – Page 52**