

# God's Will or Free Will

“And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”  
Daniel 4:35

## Introduction:

1. When a man goes to graduate school and gets a real doctorate in theology, he speaks like Nebuchadnezzar; the only problem is there are no religious schools like being put out to pasture by the King of heaven.
2. Though a thorough discussion of the will would take many hours, we shall focus on salvation and living.
3. This is a distinguishing mark of our church, as we deny the heresy of man's free will to choose salvation.

## God's Will

- A. All things in heaven and earth exist and continue by the will of Jehovah God (Genesis 1:1; John 1:3).
  1. You do not need to wonder why anything or everything exists – it is for Him (Pr 16:4; Rev 4:11).
  2. Angels were created before men with the same divine purpose as for man – His own glory!
  3. Elephants have long noses and giraffes have long necks by the sovereign will of our great God.
  4. You do not need to wonder how far His will extends, for it includes a mere sparrow (Mat 10:29).
  5. Mankind exists by the choice of the triune God to create man in their own image (Gen 1:26-27).
  6. His will can send fruitful seasons, and He can drown the earth in water (Gen 6:6-8; Acts 14:17).
  7. Some nations have boundaries set with prosperity and others with poverty (Deu 32:8; Act 17:26).
  8. It was God's will that gave you personal existence and every blessing and curse of your life.
  9. Both advantages and disadvantages of time and eternity are by the holy and just will of God.
- B. God has two wills – that which shall occur and that which we should do in obedience (Deut 29:29).
  1. God is full of secrets appointed for every individual and nations (Job 23:14; Psalm 31:15).
  2. God may reveal His secret purposes to His people by prophets (Daniel 2:27-30; Amos 3:7).
  3. God's secret will is always kept perfectly, even though His revealed will is violated (Acts 2:23).
  4. God is holy and just to punish the arrogance of wicked men fulfilling His secret will (Is 10:5-15).
  5. God restrains the violation of His revealed will to those things keeping His secret will (Ps 76:10).
- C. The blessed God has the freest and purest will of all, which is sovereign over all (Romans 9:15-22).
  1. It is God's choice which man receives His mercy and His compassion; believe it (Rom 9:15)!
  2. Therefore we conclude that man's will or efforts have nothing to do with mercy (Rom 9:16).
  3. Pharaoh is given as an illustration of a man existing and succeeding for God's glory (Rom 9:17).
  4. Therefore we conclude again that mercy, compassion, and hardening are God's choices (9:18).
  5. Paul, knowing there would be foolish questions, heads them off by asking them himself (9:19).
  6. If you object to this arrangement, you need to shut up, for your questions are out of line (9:20)!
  7. Does not a potter have total control over the clay, and so it is with our Creator over us (9:21).
  8. And God the Potter has made both vessels of mercy and wrath from human clay (Rom 9:22-24).
- D. The salvation of our souls is from beginning to end by God's free and sovereign will (Eph 1:3-12).
  1. The choice that obtains all spiritual blessings for us is God's choice in election (Eph 1:3-4).
  2. Our adoption out of sin and condemnation is according to the pleasure of His will (Eph 1:5).
  3. He makes us accepted in the Beloved, in Jesus Christ, by choosing us in Him (Eph 1:6).
  4. The forgiveness of sins is by the mystery of His will, pleasure, and purpose (Eph 1:7-10).
  5. The Lord works all things after the counsel of his own will, especially salvation (Eph 1:11-12).
- E. It is the will of God by which we are sanctified through the offering of Jesus for us (Heb 10:10).
- F. God's will is the basis for our salvation in every phase of the great work, including conversion
  1. God's will is the basis for election (Romans 9:13-24; Ephesians 1:3-6; II Timothy 1:9).
  2. God's will is the basis for justification (John 6:38-39; Eph 1:3-6; Hebrews 8:8-12; 10:5-10).
  3. God's will is the basis for regeneration (John 1:13; John 3:8; 5:21; James 1:18).

4. God's will is the basis for conversion (Acts 16:6-10; 18:9-10; I Cor 1:1; II Thess 2:13-14).
5. God's will is the basis for glorification (Ephesians 1:7-12; Psalm 89:27-37).
- G. In healing one leper, a very small minority of lepers, Jesus said, "I will; be thou clean" (Matt 8:1-4).
- H. It is our duty as the children of God to learn the revealed will of God for living (Ephesians 5:15-17).
  1. When we do the revealed will of God, He blesses us with the assurance of the truth (John 7:17).
  2. It is a choice of our new man to respond to God by obeying His will (Rom 12:1-2; I Pet 4:1-3).
  3. This is a matter of serious prayer – to know God's will – as Paul prayed for Colosse (Col 1:9).
  4. Examples of God's will for our lives are sexual purity and giving thanks (I Thess 4:3; 5:17).

## **Man's Will**

- A. The human will must be studied consecutively, in its four stages: innocence, fallen, grace, and glory.
  1. God created man upright and declared him very good in the Garden of Eden with a free will.
    - a. God declared man very good (Gen 1:31), and Adam willed to obey God (Gen 2:19; 3:8).
    - b. God's inspired revelation declares that man was created upright, but he has fallen (Ec 7:29).
    - c. Adam's death the day he ate in rebellion was the death of his free will (Gen 2:17 cp 5:5).
    - d. Read of his fear that caused him to hide from God's presence in the Garden (Gen 3:8-10).
    - e. Read of the proud and unrepentant attitude that blamed Eve for his sin (Gen 3:12).
    - f. In Eden, Adam was created with a will free to choose righteousness or to choose sin.
  2. When man fell and died in that day, his will died as to any affectionate desire toward God.
    - a. Dead in trespasses and sins, man is subject to Satan's will (Eph 2:1-3 cp II Tim 2:26).
    - b. He has no understanding or fear of God and will not seek Him (Romans 3:9-18).
    - c. He has no place in his heart for God's word or understanding of it (John 8:43,47).
    - d. His heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9).
    - e. Due to the pride of his fallen nature, man will not seek or think about God (Psalm 10:4).
    - f. Fallen man will not come to Christ, since he hates the light (John 3:19-21; 5:40).
    - g. Since he hates God and His things, man cannot obey or please God (Romans 8:7-8).
    - h. His mind is so corrupt and void of virtue, he cannot receive God (I Cor 2:14).
    - i. His will is so perverted against right thinking that he will worship trees (Is 44:9-20).
    - j. As fallen, man's will is bound to sin, but free from righteousness (Romans 6:16-20).
    - k. No matter how much influence is applied, man's will is corrupt (Is 26:10; Luke 16:31).
    - l. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and there is no desire toward spiritual things at all.
  3. When man is regenerated and quickened by grace, his will is restored to Adam's state.
    - a. God's people become willing in the day of His power (Ps 110:3 cp Philippians 2:13).
    - b. We strive here with a willing spirit and an unwilling flesh (Matt 26:41 cp Rom 7:18-25).
    - c. God does not allow events where our will cannot choose righteousness (I Cor 10:13).
    - d. After regeneration, man has two spirits, which choose righteousness or sin, respectively.
    - e. In this state, man is free to righteousness or sin by exploiting either spirit by his will.
    - f. Even after we are born again, we have total warfare between the flesh and spirit (Gal 5:17).
  4. When man is glorified in heaven, his will shall be made perfectly holy in its affections.
    - a. The resurrection shall free us finally from the corruption of the flesh (Rom 8:19-23).
    - b. In a glorified state before God, we shall only will God's righteousness (Rev 21:27).
  5. Man's four states are (a) freedom to fall, (b) freedom from righteousness, (c) freedom to righteousness, and (d) freedom from falling.
    - a. We preach the gospel to those who are regenerated, so we can reach a will able to believe.
    - b. We strive to emphasize good works, because we are free to righteousness or to sin.
- B. Pharaoh truly thought he was making his own decisions, and he did them voluntarily without coercion; but the blessed God had purposed and restrained him from any rational thought (Ex 9:16).
- C. The kings of Europe truly thought they were kings to freely choose or reject alliances (Rev 17:17).
- D. Satan, like Adam, was created with the power of volition, an ability to will; and he chose to sin.

- E. Joseph's brothers only thought about getting rid of Joseph, but God overruled it for their salvation!
- F. The will of man is not involved in the matter of salvation – legal or vital (John 1:13; Romans 9:16).
- G. Far lower in the order of things is our dependence on the will of God for minor events (Jas 4:13-15).
  1. We may choose to do this or that, but our choice is entirely dependent on God's will for blessing.
  2. Since we do not know or understand God's will, we simply do what we should do (Eccl 11:5-6).
  3. We may devise a way in our hearts, but it is the Lord that must direct our steps (Proverbs 16:9).

## **Free Will**

- A. The heresy of free will originated with the devil, and it lives still by a devilish doctrine of salvation.
  1. Satan lied in Eden that Eve would not die, so men still propose the same lie today (Gen 3:4); they refuse to teach that man is dead in trespasses and sins, without strength (Eph 2:1-3; Rom 5:6).
  2. Satan lied in Eden that Eve could be like God, so men still propose the same lie today (Gen 3:5); they teach that eternal life and all spiritual blessings are dangling there for the pick of a decision.
  3. The entire fabric of modern Christianity depends on self-determination and free will in salvation.
- B. The Roman Catholic Church pronounced a curse against anyone rejecting the heresy of free will.
  1. She is the mother church – the great whore of Revelation – mother of abominations (Re 17:1-6).
  2. She gave her opinion against true preachers of the gospel at the Council of Trent in 1546.
  3. "If any one saith, that, since Adam's sin, the free-will of man is lost and extinguished; or, that it is a thing with only a name, yea a name without a reality, a figment, in fine, introduced in the Church by Satan: let him be anathema."
  4. Clearly, the Catholics had encountered preachers of the gospel holding three ideas on free will!
- C. The Free Will Baptists state in their confession, "The human will is free and self-controlled, having power to yield to the influence of the truth and the Spirit, or to resist them and perish." Of course, this kind of a manmade salvation requires the possibility of losing your salvation to be consistent.
- D. Billy Graham wrote, "The Holy Spirit will do everything possible to disturb you, draw you, love you – but finally it is your personal decision. He gives the Holy Spirit to draw you to the cross, but even after all of this, it is your decision whether to accept God's free pardon or to continue in your lost condition. This can be accomplished when 'free will' is exercised."
- E. Free will must be assumed about man in order to allow a humanistic, self-determining salvation.
  1. Some teach God's love, Christ's death, and the Holy Spirit's conviction are all given to all men.
  2. Once assumed God has worked equally for the salvation of all men, man must be his own savior.
  3. Modern evangelistic and missionary movements are heavily based on man's free will and choice.
- F. **Free will.**
  1. The power asserted of moral beings of choosing within limitations or with respect to some matters without restraint of physical or divine necessity or causal law.
  2. The ability to choose between alternatives so that the choice and action are to an extent creatively determined by the conscious subject.
    1. Free will today is man's ability to freely choose right or wrong, God or Satan, heaven or hell.
    2. Some teach all men are born with this ability, and others teach that the Spirit gives it to all men.
    3. The only Scriptural use contrasts voluntary and required offerings (Leviticus 22:18; Ezra 3:5).
    4. Man wills freely, in that no force outside himself forces him to do anything. Man freely chooses; but he only chooses sin, because that is all he truly loves. He wants to sin; he hates holiness.
    5. God created Satan and man with wills, the ability to choose, but they both corrupted their wills.
    6. The first evil exercise of a free will was Satan's in his arrogant rebellion against God (Is 14:14).
    7. True freedom of the will must be complete deliverance from any desire or ability to choose evil.
    8. The false notion of free will assumes man has equal understanding and affection for good or evil.
- G. Scripture totally contradicts the foolish notion of free will by describing man's perpetual rebellion.
  1. Though a minister labors perfectly with a sinner, yet God must will repentance (II Tim 2:24-26).
  2. No matter what is done to influence man's will, he will still choose sinful rebellion (Is 26:10).
  3. Even if a man returned from the dead, he could have no influence over man's will (Luke 16:31).

4. Paul rejected human eloquence or persuasion, so conversion would be only of God (I Cor 2:1-5).
- H. If Paul called Pharisee religion “will worship” for petty laws, we can call Freewillism so (Col 2:23).
- I. There are objections raised against the doctrine of God’s will by those who cannot read Scripture.
  4. They say God is not willing any should perish, but they confuse who and what (II Peter 3:9).
  5. They say God’s will is for all to be saved and know the truth, but they confuse who (I Tim 2:4).
  6. They say any use of whosoever will must mean that any man can will at anytime (Rev 22:17).
  7. They say God’s will is only a hope, but they confuse His secret and revealed will (Matt 6:10).

**Conclusion:**

1. Do you live a contented and peaceful life, knowing all events are under the dominion of our heavenly Father?
2. Are you thankful to be a vessel of mercy? Or do you take it for granted, thinking you rather deserve mercy?
3. Do you serve the Lord with the realization that His mere sovereign choice keeps you out of hell?
4. Are you thankful for the gospel of grace that cuts through the heretical fog of manmade religion?

**For further study:**

1. See the sermon, “Why Preach the Gospel?”: [www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/why-preach-the-gospel.pdf](http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/why-preach-the-gospel.pdf)
2. See the sermon, “Why No Invitation?”: [www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/why-no-invitation.pdf](http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/why-no-invitation.pdf)
3. See, “Unconditional Salvation”: <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/bibletopics/Salvation/Unconditional/SevenProofs.htm>