

JESUS CAME TO DO THE WILL OF GOD

“Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, 'Here I am-it is written about me in the scroll- I have come to do your will, O God.'" (Heb 10:5-7)

The passage before us is rich with Biblical teaching of great significance. Though God commanded “sacrifice and offering” this was not His ultimate goal for mankind. Isaiah even said that God had no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, and goats (Is. 1:11). Micah also indicated that God would not be pleased with the sacrifice of thousands of lambs, and with rivers of oil (Micah 6:7). In both instances the prophets pointed out that God did not just want rituals, but rather a complete commitment to do the will of God in every area of life. In addition to “sacrifice”, “offerings”, “burnt offerings”, and “sin offerings”, the original quote from Ps. 40:6 - 8 also makes reference to the piercing of the ear and the law written upon the heart. This too references rich insight into Hebrew Law that was a harbinger of the new covenant (Ex. 21:1 - 6). For the present, however, let us defer these studies to another day and focus on the fact that Jesus came to do the will of God. Understanding the importance of this truth is significant beyond human expression. Appropriating the “mind of Christ” to submit to the will of God is essential to our salvation! We must not allow Satan to distract us from our own personal commitment to do the will of God.

ONLY TWO GROUPS

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, we will all be gathered before Him. At that time, like a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, Jesus will separate all of us into only two groups. Those on the right will receive eternal life and the rest will receive eternal punishment (Matt. 25:31 - 46).

Yes! There will be degrees of reward. Some of the saved will have authority over ten cities, and others only five (Lk. 19:16 - 19). The reason for this disparity is that we will all be rewarded based upon our works (Rev. 20:12).

Yes! There will also be degrees of punishment. Those who know their Lord’s will and reject it will be beaten with many stripes. Those who do not know the Lord’s will and disobey because of ignorance will be beaten with few stripes (Lk. 12:47 - 48).

In the final analysis, however, there are still only two groups and two eternal destinies. As someone said it: “The saved say to God ‘Thy will be done’, and God says to the lost ‘thy will be done’ “.

MY WILL - THY WILL

The night before Calvary Jesus went into the garden to pray. The crux of His conversation with God involved the focus of our present study. Would Jesus do His own will, or would He do the will of the Father?

This was not an easy decision. His soul was sorrowful unto death. He even asked for help from Peter, James, and John. His sweat was like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

The temptation to do His own will was so strong that an angel appeared to Him from heaven and strengthened Him. Time after time He pleaded with the Father to let the cup pass from His lips. Each time, however, Jesus said “no” to Himself, and “yes” to God. How appropriate! How beautiful! How profound! Jesus came to do the will of God. In this regard He set the standard! Jesus became a perfect example for everyone when He prayed: “Not my will, but Thine be done!”

The answer we give to this simple question determines whether we are saved or lost. The lost do their own will, and the saved do the will of God.

THE ORIGINAL SIN

Theologians have traditionally taught that the “original sin” took place in the Garden of Eden. Perhaps, however, a more accurate answer, however, is that the original sin took place in heaven when Satan rebelled against God. The original sin took place when Satan decided to do his own will and not the will of God. Let us consider two passages that provide insight into this rebellion. Both passages have a dual application. The first passage, (Is. 14:12 - 15), refers first to the king of Babylon. The second passage, (Ez. 28:12 - 19) refers first to the king of Tyre. In both instances, however, there is a second application. It seems that these two kings were so possessed by evil that these passages actually refer to Satan himself.

Note how the king of Babylon, like Satan, focused on his own will and not the will of God.

“ How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.” But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. ” (Isa 14:12-15)

The king of Tyre was also more intent upon doing his own will than the will of God. Note:

“The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: ""You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more.” (Ezek 28:11-20)

Both of these earthly kings were so self absorbed that they actually personified Satan. Obviously the earthly king of Babylon was not “cast down to the earth”, nor was the earthly king of Tyre in the “garden of God”. Both of these evil men, however, were so filled with the spirit of Satan that they thought exactly like he thought and rebelled against God just as he did.

A brief review of these two passages reveals that:

- Satan is not eternal, but was created.
- He was originally the model of perfection, wisdom and beauty.
- He was blameless from the day of his creation until wickedness entered him.
- His heart became proud because of his beauty.
- His sin involved doing his own will, and not the will of God.
- His rebellion filled him with the desire was to be exalted and be like God.
- Because of his sin God cast him down to the earth.
- He will ultimately be brought to a terrible end and will be no more.

It is important to note that the Satanic mind is not unique to kings and powerful rulers. It is present in every sinner. The very essence of sin is to disregard God and say; “I want, what I want, when I want it”. For any created being to place his own will before that of God is the very essence of sin. Conversion involves repentance, and the Bible word for “repentance” is “metanoeo” which literally means “to change your mind”.

SATAN IS THE GOD OF THIS WORLD

For those who believe the Scriptures there can be little doubt that God has temporarily given Satan dominion over the earth.

- He is the god of this world who blinds the minds of unbelievers (2 Cor. 4:4).
- He is the prince of the power of the air and the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience (Eph. 2:2).
- He had the power to offer Christ all the kingdoms of this world and their glory (Lk. 4:5 - 7).
- He is a murderer, liar, and the father of lies (Jn. 8:44).
- He is the prince of darkness but appears as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14).
- He can perform signs, and lying wonders (2 Thess. 2:9).
- He can deceive the nations (Rev. 12:9; 20:8).
- Satan also has angels who assist him in his evil work (Matt. 25:41).
- Satan, however, will flee when believers resist him (Ja. 4:7).
- Satan and his angels will ultimately be defeated and destroyed by God (Rev. 20:10).

We should not be surprised, therefore, that at the present time the whole world lies in wickedness (1 Jn. 5:19). True to form, this modern manifestation of evil is precisely like the original rebellion when Satan sought to assume the mantel of God.

- Anton Szandor LaVey lists nine statements from the Satanic bible. The first is that “Satan represents indulgence instead of abstinence”. This is merely another way of saying that Satan wants to do his own will and not the will of God, and all who want to do their own will and not the will fo God are to that extent Satanic.
- Karl Marx, in his poem on Human Pride, mirrors the mind of Satan with these words:

With disdain I will throw my gauntlet
Full in the face of the world.
And see the collapse of this pygmy giant
Whose fall will not stifle my ardor.
Then will I wander godlike and victorious
Through the ruins of the world
And giving my words an active force,
I will feel equal to the Creator.

- Saul Alinsky, the communist whose disciples helped Barack Obama become president, dedicated his book *Rules for Radicals*, to “*the first radical known to man who rebelled against the establishment and did it so effectively that he at least won his own kingdom - Lucifer*”.
- Placing your own will above the will of God is neither benign nor innocent. It is the root cause of rebellion and sin. It will ultimately cause the devil to be cast into a lake of fire and will also bring damnation to you if you do not repent.

THE VAST EXTENT OF SATANIC INFLUENCE

During the wilderness temptation of Christ the Scriptures state that “**The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours."** (Luke 4:5-7)

Jesus answered: “**It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'”** (Luke 4:8)

First, note the self serving nature of this Satanic temptation. “If” Jesus would only worship the devil, then He would receive all the authority and splendor of all the kingdoms of the world. Self promotion is foundational to sin. People do not lie, steal, and commit adultery to please God. They do so to please themselves. Jesus answered the devil by quoting Deut. 6:13: “**Fear the Lord your God, serve him only.**” Jesus never did sin because His will was to do the will of God.

Secondly, let us focus on the vast extent of Satanic influence. God temporarily gave to Satan all the kingdoms of this world and their splendor. If Satan did not really have this authority, there would have been no temptation. Recognizing the reality of Satanic influence places a new significance on denying ourselves and taking up our cross every day. Let us, therefore, take a closer look at the world around us.

Here are a few indications of the vast Satanic influence listed by the late Dr. Henry Morris in his book *The Long War Against God*.

- UNESCO - The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, was founded Nov. 16, 1945. It has 193 Member States and 7 Associate Members. The first Director General was Sir Julian Huxley, the grandson of Thomas Huxley, known as Darwin’s bulldog and brother of Aldous Huxley. He did not believe in God and was arguably the leading evolutionist of the Twentieth Century.
- Sigmund Freud is generally considered to be the founder of modern psychology. Though

some of his ideas have been rejected it was well known that he was an ardent follower of Darwin. It is interesting to note that “psychology” means “study of the soul” and Frued, the founder of modern psychology, did not believe in either God or the soul.

- Herbert Spencer, who has long been recognized as the father of modern sociology, was a thorough going evolutionist who coined the phrase “survival of the fittest”.
- Karl Marx framed the atheistic sociological system known as “communism”, not upon God, but the theory of evolution.
- John Dewey, generally accepted as the chief founder of the “progressive education movement”, rejected God as Creator and made evolution the center piece of education. His influence is not only felt in America, but other countries of the world as well.
- As a result of anti God education, judges have, for all intents and purposes, officially designated the United States as an atheistic nation. Please consider the U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1987 regarding the Louisiana creation law. Speaking for the 7 - 2 majority, Justice Brennan stated that belief in God was a religious viewpoint, and as such, is to be excluded from our public institutions.
- China, and other atheistic countries, limit population growth based upon the theories of evolutionist Thomas Malthus. Malthus argued that improving the lot of laboring classes would only encourage them to reproduce and thus make the struggle for existence even more severe. Malthus, who died in 1834, predicted massive starvation in Europe. Of course, he was wrong about this just as he was wrong about God!
- Hitler’s book, *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) sold more than 11,000,000 copies in 1944 and was one of the most widely read books in German history. Hitler’s belief in the survival of the fittest helps us to understand his desire to exterminate the Jews and others whom he felt were inferior.
- Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood, stated in her book “*Woman and the New Race*”, that “The most merciful thing that a large family does to one of its infant members is to kill it”. She was an evolutionist, and like Hitler before her, sought to eliminate inferior people in quest of a super race.
- We should not be surprised that in a society so saturated by godlessness, would manifest a seismic change in morality. Until this present generation premarital sex, adultery, divorce, homosexuality, etc. were considered to be immoral. Now those who oppose these sinful practices are considered to be “immoral”.
- The influence of Satan, unfortunately, has not only influenced society as a whole, but also the church. A frightening percentage of people within the church have not only abandoned the Biblical doctrine of creation, but also Biblical standards of marriage and morality.
- This is but a brief sampling of what is going on in our modern world. In last days, as you know, evil men will grow worse and worse (2 Tim. 3:13).

MEN OUGHT ALWAYS TO PRAY AND NOT GIVE UP

Those who submit to the authority of heaven have been granted the privilege of prayer. At any time, and at any place, believers can call upon God with the assurance that He will hear. By the blood of Christ we enter boldly into His presence and call Him “Abba, Father”. Jesus reminds us that when we ask our earthly father for bread he would not give us a stone, and when we ask him for a fish, he would not give us a serpent (Matt. 7:9- 11). Obviously, our Heavenly Father will treat us better than our earthly ones.

Sometimes, our Heavenly Father, will answer “yes” to our prayers. Please consider: **“ Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'" And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:1-8)**

Jesus also told another parable that was quite similar: **“Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.' "Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs. "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.” (Luke 11:5-10)**

Repeated prayer, however, is not a guarantee that God will grant our petition. Jesus, Who taught these parables, practiced what He preached. When He went into the Garden of Gethsemane He prayed the same prayer over and over for several hours and God denied His request. After the first session of prayer He found his disciples sleeping and was saddened that they could not even watch with Him for one hour. Two more times He departed into the olive trees to fall on His face before God and beg that the “cup” would pass from His lips. Each time He prayed, however, He concluded His prayer with the assurance that He was going to do the will of God and not His own.

The book of Hebrews describes the prayer of Jesus with these words: **“During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him 10 and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.” (Heb 5:7-10)**

Note:

- God heard Jesus because of His reverent submission.
- Even though Jesus was God's son, He still learned obedience from what He suffered.
- Because Jesus did the will of God and not His own He became the source of eternal

salvation for all who obey Him.

- He has been designated by God to be a high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

MURMURING AND COMPLAINING

It is important to note that when Jesus surrendered His will to the will of the Father, He did not murmur and complain about it. In fact, the Scriptures teach that Jesus endured the cross because of the joy that was set before Him (Heb. 12:2). God is good! Joyfully surrendering to His will always has a positive outcome. Everything is working together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28).

The attitude of Jesus is in sharp contrast to that of the Israelites in the wilderness. Yes! God delivered them from Egypt. Yes! God was bringing them into the land that He had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Unfortunately, however, they refused to joyfully surrender to His will. Note how they were constantly complaining:

- They murmured against Moses (Ex. 15:24).
- They wanted to return to Egypt (Ex. 14:12).
- They complained about the bread that God sent from heaven (Nu. 21:5)
- They murmured against the Lord (Ex. 16:8).
- They murmured against the princes (Joshua 9:18).
- They murmured against Aaron (Nu. 14:2).

God was not happy with their murmuring and said: **“And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swore to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.”** (Num 14:26-30)

We are, as you know, to have the mind of Christ. He was God but still humbled Himself and came to earth in the form of a servant. More than that, He became obedient unto death, even death on the cross. Immediately after pointing to the example of Christ, we are commanded to do everything without murmuring and disputing (See Philippians 2:5 - 14). There is something ungodly about complaining. Jesus never complained and neither should we.

Paul had the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16), that's why he never complained. That's why he was able to give thanks in every circumstance (1 Thess. 5:18). That's why when he was unjustly beaten and put in prison, he was singing praises (Acts 16:25). That's why when the Jews persecuted him, he wished himself accursed if only they could be saved (Rom.,. 9:1 - 5). That's

why when God refused to take away his thorn in the flesh he accepted God's will with joy and actually came to delight in his own personal weakness (2 Cor. 12:7 - 10). It is interesting to note that Jesus prayed three times in the garden for God to take away the "cup" and Paul prayed three times for God to take away the "thorn". As we have already pointed out, both Jesus and Paul joyfully submitted to the will of God.

When we have the mind of Christ we will also be able to give thanks and rejoice in every circumstance.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EXHORTATION AND PERSUASION

Man, as you know, was created in the image of God. Note the redundancy that emphasizes this very point: **"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. " (Gen 1:26-27)** Man is obviously different from animals, and superior to them. In fact, God intended for man to rule over all other living creatures (Gen. 1:28). Animals make choices based upon instinct and limited intelligence. Man makes choices on a higher level, for man was created in the image of God. A chimpanzee, for example, can learn to strike a match, but does not have the morality or intelligence to use fire in a helpful way. A man can be exhorted to do the will of God, a chimpanzee cannot.

So when Peter preached the Gospel his listeners were cut to the heart and wanted to know what to do. Peter told them to "repent and be baptized" (Acts 2:38). As we have already pointed out, repentance signifies a change of mind. The evidence Peter presented convinced them that they were wrong about Jesus, and consequently needed to change their mind and be baptized. The story, however, does not end there for **"with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40)**. Obviously, exhortation can help people to make the right choice.

The word translated as "exhort" is "parakaleo". It literally means to call a person to your side. In the KJV it is translated 43 times as "beseech", "exhort" 19 times, and "entreat" 3 times. How beautiful! When someone needs help in making the right choice we can call them to our side and exhort them. This word is quite similar to the word Jesus used to describe the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He is the "Comforter" (parakletos see (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). Jesus will not abandon us like orphans, but will send the Holy Spirit to be by our side and help us to make the right decisions.

God has given man the privilege of making choices. Men were to choose a Passover lamb, (Ex. 12:5) choose warriors to fight Alamek (Ex. 17:9), choose a wife (Ex. 34:16). choose leaders (Deut. 1:13), Etc. They could even "choose life" (Deut. 30:19) and "choose" to serve God (Josh. 24:15).

What man chooses, however, is not as important as what God chooses. That's why it is so important to do the will of God. Peter and the other fishermen toiled all night long and caught no fish. Remarkable success came, however, when they received guidance from Jesus (Lk. 5: 1 - 11). Exhorting and persuading people to do the will of God is an important part of evangelism, and Christian teaching.

- Jesus pleaded with people to come unto Him and find rest (Matt. 11:28 - 30).
- The call of Jesus to Jerusalem was like that of a mother hen calling her chicks to find refuge under her wings (Lk. 13:34 - 35).
- Paul admonished the Thessalonians like a mother caring for her children, and like a father encourages, comforts, and urges his children to live lives worthy of God (1 Thess. 2:5 - 12).
- Paul sought to persuade men because he knew the terror of the Lord (2 Cor. 5:11)
- Paul's exhortation to Festus and Agrippa was so passionate that Festus thought Paul was out of his mind (Acts 26:24).
- Paul's love for Israel was so great that he could wish himself accursed from Christ if only they would be saved (Rom. 9:1 - 5).
- Just as Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Lk. 19:41) Paul wept for those who were enemies of the cross (Phil. 3:18).
- Evangelism is like a war against a stronghold of ideas and we have been given divine power to demolish arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God (2 Cor. 10:3 - 6).
- Our struggle is not against flesh and blood (Eph. 6:12), but it is still a struggle. That's why as an ambassador of Christ Paul implored sinners to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:20).

THE CHOICE IS YOURS TO MAKE

Joshua said it like this to the Israelites: **“Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”** “ (Josh 24:14-15)

Someone has described the process of conversion and maturity like this:

- All of me and none of Christ.
- Some of me and some of Christ.
- All of Christ and none of me.

When the Jews on Pentecost surrendered to Christ they did not yet understand that this would involve accepting the Gentiles. That understanding came later (See Acts 11:19 - 24). When

the Jews at Rome received Christ they did not yet understand that they were no longer bound by Jewish laws. That understanding came later (See Romans 14:1 - 8). When the pagans at Ephesus received Christ they did not yet understand that this would involve getting rid of their pagan literature. This understanding came later (See Acts 19:19). So also with you and me. As babes in family of God we are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18).

The late Seth Wilson said: "I cannot by my own will, overcome my own will". When we invite Christ into our hearts, however, all things are possible. In Christ we become new creations (2 Cor. 5:17). In Christ we are empowered to put to death the old man that was corrupted by deceitful lusts (Eph. 4:22). In Christ we have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Christ (Col. 3:10). In Christ we have been purified by obeying the truth (1 Pet. 1:22) and empowered to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or imagine (Eph. 3:20). Whatever we do in word or deed, we should do it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father through Him (Col. 3:17)

Just as every living things needs an environment to survive, so also the new creation of God needs the church. In the church God has placed apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for the specific purpose of bringing believers to maturity. Our ultimate goal, is the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (Eph. 4:11 - 13).

The Scriptures have a great deal to say about repentance. God commands all people everywhere to repent for He has appointed a day when He will judge the world with justice. He has also given assurance of this command by raising Jesus Christ from the dead (Acts 17:31).

If you have not yet made a commitment to do the will of God and not your own, now is the time to change your mind!

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