

## ~ What is the Will of God? ~

### His Will

We as Christians believe that we understand the will of God and are filled with His spirit. But to what depth is our understanding of His Will? Let's come together with Bible in hand to consider some scriptures and thoughts that may expand our knowledge.

The Greek word, "thelema" (Strong's No. 2307), is often translated into the English words "will", "desire", or "pleasure". Strong's Concordance conveys the thought of a "determination", "choice", or "inclination". An example of thelema is found in Matthew 6:10, "Thy kingdom come. Thy [Jehovah's] **will** [desire for mankind to follow His laws] be done in earth, as *it* [His righteous law] *is* [obeyed] in heaven."

As Jehovah has a will, He gave each of His angelic and human creatures an independent will to be exercised by their own choice. The faithful angels in heaven and His only begotten son, Christ Jesus, have always done the Will of Jehovah. "Then said he, Lo, I [Jesus] come to do thy [Jehovah's] **will**...". Hebrews 10:9

When Jehovah's creatures decide to perform their self-will out of harmony with His Will, then the creature has willfully sinned. "And the serpent [used by the once perfect Lucifer] said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die [he willfully lied to deceive Eve]:" (Genesis 3:4) "And Adam was not deceived [knowingly sinned], but the woman [Eve] being deceived [into sinning] was in the transgression." (1 Timothy 2:14) Sin entered God's earthly kingdom and has continued to this day!

### The Law's Purpose

As part of a covenant relationship with Israel, God expressed His Will through the Mosaic Law. This law was more than simply the 10 commandments with the boundaries of thou "shall" or "shall not". The Law provided guidance for daily living, days of rest, offerings, etc. Yet, what was the purpose of the Law? "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* [the Jews] unto the Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Galatians 3:24,25) Their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were justified by their faith. (Hebrews 11:8-20) Having come out of Egypt (picturing the self-willed, sinful world), Jacob's children needed to put aside all disobedience and to develop faith through the works of the Law. Thus with this Law, along with Israel's lessons and experiences, they were to grow in their faith and, by accepting the promised messiah, the Law's hardships would end. "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6) True for the Law-bound Jews, as well as the believing Gentiles who were never under the Law!

As the Mosaic Law and the prophets provided instructions of God's Will ending with John the Baptist, Jesus and the apostles added to the Jew's and, now, our understanding of God's Will. Let's turn to the New Testament.

Jesus was asked which Law commandment was the greatest. He answered, "...Thou shalt **love** the Lord

thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt **love** thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:36-40; Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:34) As the Mosaic Law revealed the boundaries of actions, these two parts of God's Will show primarily that our love and honor are to be given to Jehovah and the second part is practicing the Golden Rule toward our fellow man. Luke 6:31

### What Is the Will of God?

The wording of the greatest commandment provides the content of the Will of God. To find the context, we must find other scriptures to augment our understanding.

**Relationship** – "For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." (Mark 3:35) Jehovah's Will and all His works are wholly comprised of purity, justice and truth without any thoughts or actions contrary to His divine attributes of Power, Justice, Wisdom, and Love. Therefore, to have a relationship with Jesus, each individual must know and then do the will of the Father. 2 Corinthians 6:17,18

**Transformation** – "And be not conformed to this world [of disobedience]: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind [developing a new will in harmony with Jehovah's Will], that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:2) There is a work to be done reforming our minds by casting away sin. Romans 6:6; Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:9,10

**God's Will First** – "That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God [not

Paul's will], and may with you be refreshed." (Romans 15:32) When making a decision, is our choice based on self-will or His will? Do we seek God's Will to be done only? Luke 12:31

**Freedom bought with a price** – "... and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:" (Galatians 1:3,4) It was the Will of God for Jesus to die as a ransom price for father Adam's sin and for all his children. It is the ransom which makes possible that all in the grave will be resurrected to learn the Will of God. Hebrews 9:22; 1 Timothy 2:6; 1 Peter 3:18; John 5:28,29; 1 Corinthians 15:21,22; Revelations 13:8

**Respecting Authority** – "Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;" (Ephesians 6:5,6) We would not strive to exercise self-will while serving Jesus, or Jehovah. Then why would we be disobedient to an earthly authority? Do all as if it is done unto the Lord. Romans 13:4; 1 Peter 2:13,14,17

**Improper Unions** – "For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;" (1 Thessalonians 4:3,4) There are proper and improper unions whether in marriage or union of the true church with the present evil world. God's Will is to sanctify or set apart ourselves from any union not approved by God. Leviticus 20:10-21; 2 Chronicles 21:11; Revelation 18:9

**Giving Thanks** – “Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-22) The worldly mind is blinded to righteousness, but having our eyes opened we rejoice and give thanks to Jehovah for revealing His Will. Psalms 50:14; Hebrews 13:15

**Patience** – “For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.” (Hebrews 10:36) When we consider how Jehovah is very patient with us each time we fail to be obedient, do we deny God’s Will when we are impatient with others? Romans 5:4-6; James 1:4

**Providing For Their Own** – “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” (1 Timothy 5:8) If it is the Will of the Heavenly Father to provide those things needful for His creation, how can earthly adults forget their families?

**Religious Leaders** – “This *is* a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice... lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil...” (1 Timothy 3:1-13) Jesus

instructed Peter to care for and feed his sheep knowing how Peter’s ministry would be in harmony with God’s Will, not self-ambition. Can we say the same of all the shepherds of the Lord’s flock today? 1 Peter 4:17

**Good Conscience** – “Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that they falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For *it is* better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.” (1 Peter 3:16,17) Compare the examples of good and evil consciences in Hebrews 10:22 with Titus 1:15.

**Same Mind** – “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of *our* life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:” 1 Peter 4:1-3; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 2:2; 3:16; 2 Timothy 1:7; 1 Peter 2:21; 3:8

**Self-Sacrifice** – “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.” (Romans 12:1) As Jesus made a vow of sacrifice at Jordan by taking up his cross per God’s Will, symbolized by his baptism, Paul expanded Jesus’ words of the death our self-will. Matthew 16:24.

**End of Sinful Self-will** – “And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” (1 John 2:17) When Jehovah’s Will is done on earth as the

result of the completed work of the King of kings, the returned Lord, then righteousness will be written in every heart and all will delight to do the Will of God. Those who fail to overcome sinfulness, the day when the sinner and sin cannot be separated, then the sinner with its sin will be eternally destroyed. Isaiah 65:20; Acts 3:23; Revelations 20:10, 14

### **New Will – New Creation**

“Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh [the old mind]: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more. Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature [new creation, new will]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” 2 Cor.5:16,17

Having read from His word what is God’s Will, what would bestir us to do His Will?

The answer is found in what should be our most important motive. If we truly **love** the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind, we would first want to put away our sinful self-will and learn of God’s Will. Having knowledge of that will, we should not find it grievous, but delight to do all of His Will by showing love for all, even our enemies. Luke 6:35; 1 John 4:20,21

### **Battle of the Two Wills**

Paul tells us of the battle between the new will and the old will. “*This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” Gal. 5:16-18; Rom.7:14-25.

Our heart’s intention to rise to God’s standard is possible. We considered scriptures pertaining to His Will and self-will’s desire to satisfy any lust of the flesh. We begin to see the conflict due to the influences of the present evil world. Having faith in Jesus’ sacrifice to provide the forgiveness of sins, we need to sanctify, or set apart ourselves from the world, so that our faith and works will be more Christ-like. Like Paul’s single-minded purpose to overcome and have the same mind as Christ, we are required to never stop fighting against the tendencies of the sinful flesh.

“Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines.” (Canticles 2:15) Many deal slackly with themselves in respect to little violations of their devotion to God, saying, “What’s the use of such carefulness and so different a life from that of the world in general?” Ah! there is great use in it, for victories in little things prepare for greater things and make them possible: and on the contrary, surrender to the will of the flesh in the little things means sure defeat in the warfare as a whole. We who have become “New Creatures,” reckonedly, in Christ, know that we are to be tested, and should realize that only as we practice self-denials in the little things of life, and mortify (deaden) the natural cravings of our flesh in respect to food, clothing, conduct, etc., will we become strong spiritually and be able to “overcome”.

### **Our Present Work**

The measure of our filling will correspond with the measure of our emptying of the spirit of self-will, and filling with the spirit of faith and obedience. And although the obedience cannot do otherwise than manifest itself in the daily life, nevertheless it is the

obedience of the **intention**, of the **will**, of the **heart**, that the Lord regards in His consecrated people. Hence some whose hearts are thoroughly loyal to the Lord may be pleasing to Him, while not the most pleasing to some of those with whom they come in contact; while others, "highly esteemed among men" because of outward moralities, may be an "abomination" in the sight of God, because of coldness or dishonesty of heart. Nevertheless, he that hath the new hope in him, and the new spirit, will seek to purify himself, not only in his thoughts, but also in his words and deeds and all his affairs, inward and outward. ♦

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