



## The Will of God (Sovereignty)

God has complete dominion over all that has ever existed because He is the creator of all that has ever existed. God can only make perfect decisions. His decisions all have eternal ramifications. God does whatever He desires always consistent with His perfect character and attributes. He is self-determining. He never compromises His moral perfection, righteousness, fairness, or justice. God can never do anything that is unfair. God can never do anything that is sinful, evil, or in any way contrary to His moral perfection. Gen. 1:1; Psalms 115:2-3; Psalms 135:5-6; Prov. 21:1.

*"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1, NASB)*

*"Why should the nations say, 'Where, now, is their God?' But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases." (Psalms 115:2-3, NASB)*

*"For I know that the LORD is great And that our Lord is above all gods. Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps." (Psalms 135:5-6, NASB)*

*"The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes." (Proverbs 21:1, NASB)*

This means that He has absolute power and authority over all that is or will be. God rules and reigns over everything in the universe that He has created. His volition is absolute and infinite. Because He is perfect in every aspect or attribute, God is the supreme being of the universe. Therefore, God has the authority to make perfect decisions based on His perfect knowledge. Deut. 4:39; 1 Sam. 2:6-8; 1 Chron. 29:11; 2 Chron. 20:6; Psalms 83:18; Isaiah 45:5-6; Acts 17:24.

*""Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other." (Deuteronomy 4:39, NASB)*

*""The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up. "The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts. "He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap To make them sit with nobles, And inherit a seat of honor; For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, And He set the world on them." (1 Samuel 2:6-8, NASB)*

*"and he said, "O LORD, the God of our fathers, are You not God in the heavens? And are You not ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in Your hand so that no one can stand against You." (2 Chronicles 20:6, NASB)*

*""I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me; That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other," (Isaiah 45:5-6, NASB)*

*""The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;" (Acts 17:24, NASB)*

## The Divine Decrees and The Plan of God

In eternity past, His sovereignty and omniscience created a single perfect and comprehensive plan for all of mankind as well as His angelic creation. That plan is perfect in every way and tailored for each one of us. God's plan for us is the only means to produce meaning, definition, and purpose within our lives. The only way to actively participate in His plan is to enter that plan through salvation is our Lord Jesus



Christ. We function in accordance with the plan through the filling of the Holy Spirit and the intake and application of Bible doctrine. God has determined that we as believers will spend eternity with the Lord in heaven which He has created for His own.

God's perfect decisions were all made in eternity past before He created time. All of God's decisions are collectively referred to as the divine decrees. God's decisions expressed His perfect will or volition. God's decisions for each of us is called the plan of God. The sovereignty of God is the expression of His perfect volition and decisions. All of His decisions were based on His perfect knowledge and thinking. There never was a thought or decision He didn't have from eternity past. God has never made a bad decision. God has expressed His will or divine volition for each one of us and created His perfect plan for the entire human race. Eph. 1:5; Heb. 6:17.

*"He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will," (Ephesians 1:5, NASB)*

*"In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath," (Hebrews 6:17, NASB)*

There never was or will be a person for whom God did not have a perfect plan in eternity past. God's plan for our lives is the only way of happiness, tranquility, and blessing. The pivotal point in God's plan is always salvation through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ. No human being has been left out. No human being was considered insignificant.

God is eternal and infinite. Therefore, God's sovereignty is eternal, infinite, and self-determining. God did not consult with anyone in order to make all of His decisions for eternity in an instant in eternity past. Psalms 93:2; Psalms 8:1; Acts 5:39; Heb. 6:13-14.

*"Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting." (Psalms 93:2, NASB)*

*"For the choir director; on the Gittith. A Psalm of David. O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens!" (Psalms 8:1, NASB)*

*"but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God."" (Acts 5:39, NASB)*

*"For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, 'I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU.'"" (Hebrews 6:13-14, NASB)*

Most of us find this principle difficult to comprehend. This is because we are finite and are definitely not omniscient. Human decisions are best made when the decision-maker has the clear authority to make the decision. The decision-maker is motivated to make the decision so action can be taken. The decision-maker need not consult with others to make the decision. The decision-maker has the knowledge to make a correct or best decision. All options are well understood by the decision-maker. The decision-maker believes that the one presenting the information has integrity and is truthful in his presentation of each option.

Human decisions are best made when there is enough time allowed to make a correct decision. An active decision must be made rather than a passive decision where you let time or others make the decision for you. All applicable and relevant options are being presented. All options are presented clearly, objectively, and without bias. The presentation of each option contains enough information to allow an objective decision to be made.



Most human decisions are made with one or more of these ideal conditions absent. God's decisions were all perfect and made with all of His absolute attributes involved and in perfect harmony. God as the decision-maker in eternity past is perfect. He also was the perfect preparer of all possible options through His omniscience, thus allowing all information to be considered. God was also the communicator and did a perfect job of it. The result was God's plan. His plan required no draft plans for pondering, review, reflection, or correction. God's plan required no additional information or time to allow the decision. He knew all of the knowable, all that would occur, and all that could have occurred in an instant. Therefore, all perfect decisions could be made because no more information could ever be obtained. Only a perfect and absolute God could do this. What we now see in human history is simply the unfolding of His perfect plan as time passes.

### **Coexistence of God's Sovereignty and Free Will of Created Beings**

God's sovereignty means He is the supreme ruler over all forms of existence. He created two types of rational creatures - angelic creatures and mankind. The sovereignty of God and the free will of angels coexisted prior to the creation of mankind. The sovereignty of God and free will of man coexist in human history by divine decree. The sovereignty of God created beings with the power of choice and free will. God rules over these creatures with power, justice, wisdom, and grace. Under His decreed free will, we each have been given freedom to reject or accept His plan through rejection or acceptance of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ had to make a decision from His humanity to submit to the Cross and bear the judgment for the sins of the entire human race. Based on His decision, God the Father then imputed all of mankind's sins to the humanity of Christ on the Cross and judged them. Now, all unbelievers must make a decision regarding Christ and His work on the Cross. With positive volition, unbelievers become believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and are given eternal salvation through grace. With negative volition, unbelievers reject Jesus Christ as Savior and continue their path to eternal condemnation. John 3:18; John 3:36.

*"He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:18, NASB)*

*""He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."" (John 3:36, NASB)*

God does not coerce any decision - ever. God provides information so we can make free will decisions, but He never coerces free will. Therefore, we all have free will just as angelic creatures in eternity past had the same free will. Some chose for Satan and some chose for God. Mankind was created as a lower creation, but with the same pattern of options in order to resolve the Angelic Conflict. The principle is that the sovereignty of God and the free will of angels coexisted in eternity past by divine decree. The sovereignty of God and the free will of man coexist in human history by divine decree. God desires that all will chose freely for His plan, but allows anyone to reject that plan. This freedom of decisions indicates that volition is a critical factor in the Word of God. 2 Peter 3:9.

*"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9, NASB)*

### **Mankind's Free Will**

In His sovereignty, God decided to give man a free will. By His own decree, God cannot override our free will. The focal point of man's free will and God's sovereignty is the Cross. John 3:16.

*"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall*



*not perish, but have eternal life. " (John 3:16, NASB)*

There are three important facets of God's plan for the human race. The first is that all be given a clear opportunity to believe in Jesus Christ for salvation. Acts 16:31; 2 Peter 3:9.

*"They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."" (Acts 16:31, NASB)*

*"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9, NASB)*

He does not want any to choose against Him, but He allows them to do exactly that, if they so desire. God the Holy Spirit guarantees that this decision will not be coerced and that the issue of salvation will be made clear to all.

The second facet is that during life on earth, God wants every believer to be filled with the Holy Spirit a maximum amount of the time and grow to a mature knowledge of Jesus Christ. Eph. 5:18; John 7:17; 1 Peter 3:18.

*"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit," (Ephesians 5:18, NASB)*

*"If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself. " (John 7:17, NASB)*

*"For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;" (1 Peter 3:18, NASB)*

God's plan requires your positive volition before the Holy Spirit can teach you. Negative volition means that you are not filled with the Holy Spirit due to sin in your soul. You may be aware of these sins or not. However, God is always aware. Positive volition followed by confession of sin biblically restores the filling of the Spirit. 1 John 1:9.

*"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9, NASB)*

Negative volition means that God's plan proceeds to unfold without your involvement. Positive volition means that you are an active part of His plan. We will never be content or have the happiness in life that God planned for us until we do His good pleasure. God's good pleasure is found only in the written Canon of the Scripture. Remember that in spite of all of our failures, as long as we are alive, God still has a plan for our lives. Phil. 2:13.

*"for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13, NASB)*

The third facet of God's plan for the human race is that He planned that all believers will have an eternal life with Him in heaven, in a perfect resurrection body. 1 John 5:11-12; John 11:25-26; Phil. 3:20-21.

*"And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life." (1 John 5:11-12, NASB)*

*"Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" " (John 11:25-26, NASB)*



*"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself." (Philippians 3:20-21, NASB)*

The omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit provides a resurrection body for the living believers at the Rapture of the Church, replacing their bodies of mortality with resurrection bodies of immortality. 1 Cor. 15:50-53; 1 Cor. 15:42-44.

*"Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality." (1 Corinthians 15:50-53, NASB)*

*"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body." (1 Corinthians 15:42-44, NASB)*

### **God's Sovereignty Related to His Omnipotence and Omniscience**

The sovereign will of God is empowered by His omnipotence and omniscience. God has both the wisdom and power to carry out all that He wills from His sovereignty. There never was a time in eternity past and never will be a time when God does not know every thought, motive, decision, and action of every rational creature, angelic or human. Therefore, God has complete and total knowledge, which makes His sovereignty and His decisions perfect, because He has all the facts. When God makes a decision, it is based on complete knowledge and understanding of the issues.

### **God's Sovereignty and Human Responsibility**

Divine sovereignty and human responsibility are not contradictory. This is because God has decreed that during the course of human history, the sovereignty of God and the free will of man will coexist. This part of God's plan is designed to resolve the Angelic Conflict. This resolution demonstrates to Satan and all fallen angels that God's judgment of them prior to the creation of mankind was absolutely, completely, and totally fair.

God, in His perfect fairness, provides all members of the human race with the same equal opportunity to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Many refuse to believe and reap the results which is eternal damnation and separation from God. John 3:18; John 3:36.

*"He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:18, NASB)*

*"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:36, NASB)*

God's plan also uses human means to accomplish His will and purpose, yet without ever coercing any human being at any time. Coercion is the evil function of human beings trying to impose their will on others.

The sovereignty of God does not minimize or compromise human responsibility. No one exists independently of the sovereignty of God. God keeps you alive through grace provision to reject or to accept His will. The person who dies without reaching the point of accountability is automatically saved





because God is always fair. The sovereignty of God gave you the soul life that resides in your body at birth. Those who claim there is no God fail to understand that God is the one who continues to sustain all of us in this life. God even sustains the breath and existence of the atheist, who uses the faithfulness of God to deny His existence. Psalms 14:1-3.

*"For the choir director. A Psalm of David. The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good. The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God. They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one." (Psalms 14:1-3, NASB)*

### **God's Sovereignty in Action**

The sovereign will of God has revealed Himself to us through the Word of God, Bible doctrine. The sovereign will of God deals with us through His grace to give us the most fantastic plan for our lives. This plan is greater than He has given to anyone in any dispensation.

In God's plan, the sovereignty of God the Father sent Jesus Christ to the Cross to provide our eternal salvation. God's decisions are based upon perfect and eternal knowledge and motivation. Moreover, the sovereignty of God always functions in total compatibility with all of His other divine attributes.

Because God is eternal, His perfect decisions from His sovereignty are compatible with His eternal and infinite self-existence. Because God is immutable and unchangeable, He has never had to reverse a decision. God does not have to be flexible. He is perfect. As perfect, infinite, and eternal God, He never has to withdraw a decision. His decisions were perfect billions of years ago and they will remain perfect forever.

Because God's integrity is incorruptible, His decisions are perfect. God's gracious and unfailing love toward us is perfect in every way. All of these add up to the fact that God cannot make a bad decision, even once. From His sovereignty, God made billions and billions of decisions in eternity past in an instant.

### **God's Sovereignty and Our Dying**

When it comes time for us to die, the time, place, and manner of our dying are determined by the sovereignty of God. God, as the sovereign of the universe, expresses His supreme reign, wisdom, and grace in His decisions that relate to mankind. God has never made a mistake or made a bad decision with regard to our living. He never makes a bad decision with regard to the time, the place, and the manner in which we die. The closer we come to lining up with His plan for our lives, the greater our capacity for life and therefore, the greater the blessing He is able to convey to us as we live. When we fail to line up with the sovereign decisions of God, the greater becomes our self-induced misery and divine discipline.

In all matters of life and death, God's timing is perfect. The death of the believer is a wise and gracious decision of God. Psalms 116:15.

*"Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His godly ones." (Psalms 116:15, NASB)*

We who are left behind have no right to question the wisdom, justice, grace, or perfect timing of God regarding the death of someone we love dearly. Job's attitude provides a grace oriented object lesson for us all. Job 1:20-22.

*"Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. He*



*said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD." Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God." (Job 1:20-22, NASB)*

Believers should never fear death. Our salvation in Jesus Christ has provided us an eternal victory over death. John 14:1-6; 1 Peter 1:3-5.

*"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. "And you know the way where I am going." Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. " (John 14:1-6, NASB)*

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter 1:3-5, NASB)*

That salvation is protected by God's promise of Romans 8:38-39. Because of this, we should understand that living for the grace oriented believer is living life with eternity in focus. 2 Cor. 5:6-8.

*"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39, NASB)*

*"Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight—we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord." (2 Corinthians 5:6-8, NASB)*

God knew in eternity past the exact moment you would be born and the exact moment when you will depart from this life. God does not stop suicides from happening because God never has and never will coerce the free will decisions of mankind. He decreed that His sovereignty would coexist with the free will of man in human history. The death of every believer is always a matter of God's grace. Since God has eternal, personal love for each of us, it is impossible for God to do anything incompatible with His perfect love for each one of us. Therefore, we have no right to question the wisdom or justice of God, when someone we love dies.

Life must go on for the living even following the death of a loved one. We cannot resent others who seem to be having a good time while we are mourning for the loss of a loved one. Your comfort in time of sorrow must come from God's Word learned and retained in your own soul. Your grief is a private matter between you and the Lord. You have no right to bitterness, anger, or abnormal grief. Bible doctrine resident in your soul enables you to rejoice over those loved ones who are in the presence of the Lord. The enabling power of the Holy Spirit provides the ability to handle your loneliness, sorrow, and grief in the proper manner. As with any tough situation in life, application of Bible doctrine means that you are relying on God's grace resources applied to the situation rather than the sin nature's approach of bitterness, abnormally long grief, blaming yourself in some way for their death, or resenting God's sovereign decision to take them from this life.

In the dying phase of God's plan for our lives, the emphasis is on the function of the sovereignty and



grace of God, because God decides the time, manner, and place of our death. The challenge to every believer is always to apply the Bible doctrine we have learned to the problems and situations in which we find ourselves. Application to the death of a loved one is simply one of those points of application where we learn that God's grace is always sufficient for us to handle the situation – always when we feel we can't handle it by ourselves.

The Apostle Paul had a different problem that he didn't feel he could handle. He found that God intended that he apply the Bible doctrine in his soul to the situation. God's answer was that He had already provided the solution in Paul's soul – handle it based on God's Word already learned, believed and ready for application. 2 Cor. 12:7-9.

*"Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me." (2 Corinthians 12:7-9, NASB)*

### **God's Sovereignty in the Angelic Conflict**

The Angelic Conflict began with the fall of Satan and his revolt in arrogance against God before the creation of mankind. All angels were given a free will choice to choose either for Satan or for God. One-third chose for Satan and are called fallen angels. Because of Satan's sin of arrogance against the perfect and righteous God, Satan was sentenced to the Lake of Fire for eternity by God the Father's perfect justice. All fallen angels now share that destiny. However, the sentence was not carried out at that time and will not be carried out until the end of human history. Isaiah 14:12-15; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10.

*"How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! 'But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'*

*'Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit.' (Isaiah 14:12-15, NASB)*

*"Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; "*

*'And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.' (Revelation 20:10, NASB)*

Mankind's free will is the issue of human history. The free will of fallen angels rejected God and followed Satan. Therefore, in eternity past, the sovereignty of God and the free will of angels coexisted. The free will of the elect angels was compatible with the sovereignty of God. The free will of the fallen angels contradicted the sovereignty of God.

Satan's sentence was then postponed for the creation of mankind to resolve this appeal trial through their free will decisions either for Jesus Christ or not for Jesus Christ. All who choose for Jesus Christ share His destiny in heaven for eternity. All human beings who choose to reject Jesus Christ's salvation work on the Cross share Satan's destiny and that of all fallen angels which is the Lake of Fire for eternity.

Mankind was created to resolve the Angelic Conflict because Satan appealed his sentence. Human





history is the appeal trial of Satan and all fallen angels. The only thing mankind has in common with angels is free will. Just as angelic volition and the sovereignty of God coexisted in prehistoric times, so human free will and the sovereignty of God coexist in human history. The final condemnation of Satan and fallen angels results from the fact that human free will is compatible with the sovereignty of God.

## Conclusions

The existence of mankind will continue in spite of man's weapons of mass destruction and in spite of the evil of man. The human race will not be destroyed until the end of God's plan for the human race, which will occur at the end of the Millennium. Psalms 93:1.

*"The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The LORD has clothed and girded Himself with strength; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved." (Psalms 93:1, NASB)*

There is a time in the life of every believer when the function of their free will is shut down. This time is the beginning of the death of the believer. The sovereignty of God has chosen the time, the place, and the manner of every believer's death. The sovereignty of God has also chosen what happens to every believer after their physical death. We will all be absent from the body and face to face with the Lord. The sovereignty of God has chosen the time, the place, and the manner of every believer's resurrection. The sovereignty of God has chosen the eternal state for every believer. Therefore, the believer has only a short time on this earth between the moment of salvation and the moment of death to glorify God by the proper use of human volition. How are you redeeming your time? Col. 4:5; Eph. 5:15-16.

*"Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity." (Colossians 4:5, NASB)*

*"Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil." (Ephesians 5:15-16, NASB)*