

“IT’S GOD’S WILL THAT YOU BE SAVED”

God’s will? Yes! This is true; and we can say this to anyone: “It’s God’s will that you be saved.” But when we say this, we should understand what *we are* saying, and what *we are not* saying: **(1)** It was God’s will that Christ was lifted up on the cross that any and all might look unto him and be saved (*Isaiah 45:22; John 3:14-17*); **(2)** it is God’s will that the gospel be preached to all men everywhere that they might hear and be saved (*Matt 28:19,20; Mark 16:15*); and **(3)** it is God’s will that every man repent of his sins and believe the gospel and be saved (*Ezek 33:11; Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38; 16:31; 17:30; 2 Cor 5:20; 1 Tim 2:4; 1 John 3:23*). This is truly God’s will; and this is what *we are* saying. While all of these points, **#1, #2 & #3** are involved in this statement, **#3** is basically where it’s coming from. Now let’s talk about **God’s will**, and discover just what it is that *we are not* saying.

There are two aspects of God’s will we must clearly distinguish: **(1) God’s will of purpose** (*decretive will*), and **(2) God’s will of command** (*preceptive will*). These are not to be confused. God’s will of **purpose** is *always done*; it can *never be thwarted*: “He worketh *all things* after the counsel *of his own will*” (*Eph 1:11*). On the other hand, his will of **command** is *often ignored* and *left undone*. Men are in rebellion against him.

God’s will of purpose: **(1) It’s eternal.** God is not forming any new purposes; his counsels are of old (*Isaiah 25:1; Eph 3:11*). What is to be, will be. All of “God’s works” are known “from the beginning” (*Acts 15:18*). **(2) It’s effectual.** God’s will of purpose is always accomplished. He never engages in *wishful thinking*; what he desires he performs (*Job 23:13; Isaiah 14:24-27*). See him purposing the death of Christ from eternity and controlling and directing the free actions of sinful men to bring this to pass *precisely* as prophesied centuries before! (*Acts 2:23; 4:27,28*). **(3) It’s immutable.** “Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; as I have purposed, so shall it stand” (*Isaiah 14:24*). God’s will of purpose *never changes*. He’s *all-wise* in *planning*, and *all-powerful* in *performing*. **(4) It’s the cause of our conversion.** We “received Christ,” John says, because we “*were born*, not... of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but *of God*” (*John 1:12,13*). Saving faith is the work and gift of God! (*Eph 2:8*). “*Of his own will* begat he us with the word of truth” (*James 1:18*).

God’s will of command: This has to do with how we are to think and act; God has *sovereign authority* over us. God’s will of **command** is what we are responsible to perform, *not* his will of **purpose**. It was his will of *purpose* for Christ to be crucified (*1 Peter 1:18-20; Rev 13:8*), but not his will of *command*. Wicked men fulfilled the purpose of God that day, but they were *not* obeying a command of God. What he *purposes* is the determining factor; what he *commands* is our duty.

It’s unbelievable that people see this distinction in everything *except spiritual matters*! They hear of the doctrine of election, and say, “Well, if I believed that, I wouldn’t do anything! If I’m one of God’s elect, I’ll be saved, no matter what!” And so election and salvation, and **God’s will of purpose** in them, is ridiculed! But isn’t this year’s harvest equally determined by God’s will of purpose? Absolutely! It will be *exactly* what God has determined it to be! No more and no less! Yet we don’t hear these same people making such ridiculous statements: “Well, if that’s true, there’s no use to plow! no use to plant! If God’s *already determined* this year’s crop, it’s gonna be what it’s gonna be, no matter what! We don’t have to do anything!” Isn’t it *comical*, that in *spiritual matters alone* they say these things! They acknowledge *both aspects* of God’s will in everything—*except salvation*!

Now let’s get back to our opening statement: “**It’s God’s will that you be saved.**” What are we *not* saying? We are *not* saying, “**God wants you to be saved.**” Not at all; the Bible doesn’t speak like that about God, neither should we. That gives the impression that God *wants* things. God doesn’t *want* you to repent; he *commands* you to! (*Acts 17:30*). God doesn’t *want* you to believe; he *commands* you to! (*1 John 3:23*). There’s a big difference. God is a glorious Sovereign who commands with authority! He’s not to be viewed as someone who’ll be *disappointed* if he doesn’t get what he *wants*. It’s repent or perish! It’s not, “God *wants* to have his way in your life.” So when we say, “It’s God’s will that you be saved,” what do we have in view? **God’s will of command!** Those who obey God’s command to repent and believe—*will be saved!*

What else are we not saying? We are *not* saying, “**God has purposed you to be saved.**” **God’s will of purpose** has *nothing* to do with this. God has *not* revealed whom he’s *purposed to save*. “The *secret things* belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are *revealed* belong unto us” (*Deut 29:29*). Whom God has purposed to save is his *secret counsel*, and that can never fail: “The Lord hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?... Yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it” (*Isaiah 14:27; 46:11*). But God’s *revealed will* is no secret! Repent and believe and you will be saved! This is absolutely certain! You obey **God’s will of command** and you’ll find yourself right in the middle of **God’s will of purpose** to save you from all eternity! Hear it: “All that the Father giveth me [*his purpose!*] shall come to me [*his command!*]; and him that cometh to me...” (*John 6:37*). □