

PROVIDENCE AND FREE WILL

1 John 2:3-6

I. THREE CATEGORIES OF GOD'S WILL.

- A. God's Intentional Will.
 - 1. Matthew 18:14 – parable of the lost sheep.
 - 2. What God specifically desires and will work to accomplish.
 - a. When babies die or faithful Christians killed in accidents.
 - b. Job 1:22 – "...nor did he blame God."
 - 3. Because of free will – evil acts happen; Satan is at work.
- B. God's Circumstantial Will.
 - 1. Adam and Eve.
 - a. Curse of man, woman and ground. Genesis 3:14-19
 - b. Not God's intentional will for sin to be in the world.
 - 2. Circumstantial will – (Genesis 2:17)
 - a. That sinful humanity not live forever in a world infected with sin and its consequences.
 - b. Disease, calamity and death entered our world.
 - 3. This change was not in accordance with God's intentional will, but brought about by rebellion to His will.
- C. God's Ultimate Will.
 - 1. Job 42:2, "I know that Thou canst do all things, and that no purpose of Thine can be thwarted [*prevented*]."
 - 2. Judas' betrayal of Jesus. *Matthew 26:14-16; 47ff*
 - a. Did not thwart God's will.
 - b. Rather, helped to accomplish His will.
 - c. Acts 2:23
 - 3. God's omnipotence means that neither we nor all the powers of hell can ultimately defeat Him.

II. THE FREEDOM OF CHOICE.

- A. Made In His Image. Genesis 1:27
 - 1. Freedom to choose so that we may love and have fellowship with Him, because we want to.
 - 2. He does not impose His will on us. To do so would be to remove free will.
- B. Calvinism.
 - 1. Doctrine of "pre-destination".
 - a. Romans 8:29-30
 - b. Ephesians 1:5, 11
 - c. Every detail of our lives is planned out – "pre-destined" by God.
 - 2. Does God have a plan for your life? YES!
 - a. 1 Timothy 2:3-4
 - b. 2 Peter 3:9
 - c. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
 - d. Ephesians 1:4
- C. God Has Led Me Here.
 - 1. A supernatural guidance for the apostles, i.e. Acts 16:6-10.
 - 2. Similar language largely absent in Scripture.
 - a. Paul and Silas. 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2

- i. Paul thought it “best”.
 - b. Paul and Epaphroditus. Philippians 2:25-26, 28
 - i. In his wisdom, Paul determined the best course of action.
- D. More Than One Right Choice.
 - 1. Adam and Eve in the Garden.
 - a. Limitations. Genesis 2:16-17
 - b. From which tree can I eat?
 - c. The choice is yours – likes and dislikes.
 - 2. Marriage. 1 Corinthians 7
 - a. Paul states that we are free to choose. Vss. 8-9
 - b. A widow [following moral directives] – vs. 39.
 - i. “...to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.”

IV. HOW WE CAN MAKE WISE CHOICES.

- A. God Promises Wisdom.
 - 1. James 1:5
 - a. Wisdom and specific information are not the same.
 - b. James 3:17 – wisdom from above.
 - 2. Christians can be competent in making wise decisions.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 6:2, “...judge the world?”
 - b. Use spiritual discernment – seeking God and His righteousness, Matthew 6:33.
 - c. Seeking to please Him in all things.
- B. Paul Going to Jerusalem. Acts 21:9-14
 - 1. Prophecy of Paul in bonds in Jerusalem.
 - 2. Paul’s statement, Acts 21:13.
 - 2. Luke’s response, “The will of the Lord be done.” Vs. 14
- C. John 14:15, “If you love Me,...”
 - a. It is not an “inclination” or “strong impulse”, or a “new revelation”.
 - b. Choices are made based on our love for the Lord.
 - c. Matthew 22:37-39

CLOSING

- A. Where there is no divine command or moral principle.
 - 1. We are free to choose.
 - 2. But, we are responsible for our personal choices.
 - 3. Any decision made within the moral will of God is acceptable to God.
- B. It is the age old call from God...
 - 1. Exodus 19:5, “...if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, ...”.
 - 2. Matthew 6:24, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”
 - 3. Philippians 2:12, “...work out your salvation with fear and trembling; ...”
 - 4. Joshua 24:15, “...choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: ...”