

**LOVE, CHOICE,  
AND THE THREE WILLS OF GOD (Part 2)**  
(Romans 9:1-12)

**I. PRELIMINARIES**

- A. Welcome
- B. Pastoral Prayer
- C. Dismiss the Kids
- D. Today's Text:

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying—my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit *when I say*<sup>2</sup> that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.<sup>3</sup> For I could wish that I myself were accursed—*cut off* from Christ—for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh,<sup>4</sup> the people of Israel. To them *belong* the adoption as sons, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, the service of worship, and the promises;<sup>5</sup> to them belong the fathers, and from them, according to the flesh, came the Messiah, who is over all, God forever blessed. Amen!

<sup>6</sup>But it is not as if the word of God has fallen to the ground, for they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel,<sup>7</sup> nor are they all children *simply* because they are the seed of Abraham; rather, “It is through Isaac that your seed will be named.”<sup>8</sup> In other words, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God; rather, it is the children of the promise who are counted as the seed.<sup>9</sup> For this is a word of promise: “At that time I will come, and Sarah will have a son.”<sup>10</sup> And that is not all; there is also Rebekah, who conceived *twins* by one man, our father Isaac.<sup>11</sup> Yet before they were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God’s purpose in election might stand, which is not based on works, but on him who calls—<sup>12</sup>it was said to her, “The older will serve the younger.”<sup>13</sup> Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

- E. Prayer over the Ministry of the Word

**II. INTRODUCTION**

- A. Opening Illustration:

- Steve Carver at the Grand Canyon (Slide)
- MP: Today’s text—and today’s subject-- has a mysterious capacity to usher us into the presence of the breathtaking GREATNESS of God

- B. Review:

1. The Gist of Romans 9-11

- The presenting problem: the scandal of Jewish unbelief
- In part, Paul writes to explain this

- In larger part, he writes to disclose the great mystery of God's sovereign dealings with Israel and the nations, and to show that God is righteous in all his ways

## 2. What we encountered last week: A theological puzzler

- (1-5) Paul's astounding (and supernatural) love for all Israel: From this it is clear God desires ALL Israel to be saved (Rom. 10:1)
- (10-13) God's unconditional election of SOME of Israel: From this it is clear that God does NOT desire all Israel to be saved!

<sup>10</sup> And that is not all; there is also Rebekah, who conceived *twins* by one man, our father Isaac.  
<sup>11</sup> Yet before they were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand, which is not based on works, but on him who calls—<sup>12</sup> it was said to her, “The older will serve the younger.” <sup>13</sup> Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

- Question: What are we to make of this? How do we get a handle on it?

### III. THE THREE WILLS OF GOD

#### A. Preliminary Remarks

- The theologian's handles: *The three wills of God*.
- MP: As we go into this, you may see something new: The GREATNESS of God: the infinite complexity of his being, and the mystery of his ways.
- MP: New perception, new humility, reverence, awe, gratitude, and love.

**B. The Will of Affection (or Benevolence):** The good things that the good God sincerely (affectionately) desires for all his creatures

- Seen in providence (and the loving kindness behind it)

The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. – Psalm 145:9

<sup>16</sup> In generations past he let all the nations walk in their own ways; <sup>17</sup> but he never left himself without a witness, doing *you* good by giving you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, *and* by satisfying you with food and filling your hearts with gladness.” – Acts 14:16

- Seen in his desire for the salvation of all

“Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is no other. – Is. 45:2

<sup>28</sup> Come to me, all who are weary and loaded down, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke *is* easy and my load is light.” – Mt. 11

Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God *concerning Israel* is for their salvation. – Rom. 10:1

<sup>9</sup> The Lord is not delaying *his* promise in the way some people think about delays; rather, he is longsuffering towards you, not desiring that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. – 2 Peter 3

<sup>17</sup> Now the Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” So let the one who hears say, “Come!” And let the one who is thirsty come. *Yes*, let the one who so desires take the water of life without cost! – Rev. 22

- Seen in his grief over the loss of any

Say to them, ‘As I live!’ declares the Lord God, ‘I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?’ – Ezek. 33:11

<sup>41</sup> Now when he drew near *and* beheld the city, *Jesus* wept over it, <sup>42</sup> saying, “If *only* you—especially you—had known on this day the things *that were meant* for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. – Luke 19

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying—my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit *when I say*<sup>2</sup> that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. <sup>3</sup> For I could wish that I myself were accursed—*cut off* from Christ—for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> the people of Israel. – Rom. 9:1-3

- What is the application? In a moment

C. **The Will of Command (or Precept):** The right things that the holy and righteous God commands his creatures to be and do

- Law commands (HSL)

1. Examples: The Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the epistles, etc. // The Great Commandment (Mt. 22:34f)

2. Gospel Commands (HSL)

<sup>14</sup> Now after John had been handed over to the authorities, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God <sup>15</sup> and saying, “The appointed time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is near. *Repent and believe the good news!*” –Mark 1

Now in response, Jesus again spoke to them in parables, saying: <sup>2</sup>“The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. <sup>3</sup>And he sent out his servants to call those who had been invited to the feast; but they were unwilling to come. <sup>4</sup>So again he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who were invited, “Look, I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and my fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything *is* ready. Come to the feast!’” ’

<sup>30</sup> So then: Though God *previously* overlooked such times of ignorance, he is now commanding all men everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup>for he has fixed a day on which he intends judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, proving *this* to everyone by raising him from the dead.” – Acts 17

3. Note: It is the willful violation of these commands that awakens God’s wrath and “hatred” of *sins* and *sinner*s

Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. – Rev. 2:6

“The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong.” – Psalm 5:5

And the one who loves violence his soul hates. – Psalm 11:5

A false witness, and a person who spreads strife. – Prov. 6

- What is the Application? (In a moment)

**D. The Will of Event (or Purpose or Decree):** Everything that happens, whether good or bad. The wise, sovereign, and incomprehensible God has decreed it all.

- Events in general

I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like me. <sup>10</sup>I make known the end from the beginning, *and* from ancient times what is still to come, saying, ‘*My purpose will stand*, and I will do all my good pleasure.’ – Isaiah 46

<sup>11</sup>In him we also have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his *own* will . . .

- Redemptive Events in Particular: Salvation and Perdition

When the Gentiles (in Antioch) heard this, they *began* rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. – Acts 13:48

<sup>6</sup>For this reason we read in Scripture: “Behold, I lay in Zion a stone, a chosen and precious cornerstone; and he who believes in him will never be put to shame.”<sup>5</sup> <sup>7</sup>So then, for you who believe, this stone is precious; but for those who disbelieve, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,” <sup>8</sup>and “a stone that causes stumbling, and a rock that brings offense.” They stumble because they are disobedient to the word, to which also they were appointed. <sup>9</sup>But you *are* a chosen family, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God’s own* possession, so that you may proclaim the excellences of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; <sup>10</sup>who once were not a people, but now are the people of God; who *once* had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. –1 Peter. 2

#### IV. TWO EXAMPLES TO CONSIDER

A. Preface: The three wills serve as “tri-focal glasses” through which to observe events

B. The great value of viewing events through the helpful three-fold lens:

- The Exodus
- The Cross

#### VI. CONCLUSION AND APPLICATION

A. The three wills of God raise HUGE QUESTIONS:

- Why would God decree what brings him sorrow?
- Why would God decree what he commands men not to do?
- Why would God decree what he hates, and what excites his wrath?
- In next week’s text, Paul addresses answers these very questions
- Hint: The GOOD God has GOOD reasons for doing what he does. We must TRUST this, even if we cannot perfectly understand

B. Application:

1. Transitional Slide: Life in the Valley, beneath the comforting shadow of the Mountain (S) (HSL)

2. The will of affection:

- Think OFTEN of his love, kindness, and goodness toward YOU (Ex. 33:18-20)
- Do the same for everyone else! (Mt. 5:43f, John 3:16)

3. The will of command:

- Obey them yourself (hidden in the Gospel, leaning on the Spirit)
- And preach them boldly to others (but always with gentleness and respect)

4. Will of event:

- Comforted by the Mountain
- But living humbly, faithfully, and joyfully in the valley below

#### VII. Closing Prayer

## Relevant Texts

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that have been revealed belong to us and to our children forever! – Dt. 29:29

<sup>43</sup>“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup>But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup>so that you may show yourselves sons of your Father in heaven; for he causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. <sup>46</sup>For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Don’t even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup>And if you only greet your brothers, what are you doing more than anyone else? Don’t even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup>Therefore you must be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect. – Matthew 5