

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## God's Will

(Jerry Fite)

God's "sovereign will" is a biblical concept. When Nebuchadnezzar experienced being driven from men to eat grass like an ox, he acknowledged God's greatness: "...for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and He doeth according to His own will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, 'What doest thou?'" (Daniel 4:34-35). The inspired Psalmist writes, "For our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He pleased" (Psalms 115:3).

These two passages manifest God's "sovereign will". When Nebuchadnezzar was at the zenith of his power and glory, God humbled him. Not even the great king Nebuchadnezzar could restrict the will of God. God's power was absolute over him. When he was restored to his kingdom, Nebuchadnezzar said, "...and those who walk in pride He is able to abase" (Daniel 4:37). God, in the heavens, does what He pleases on earth.

While Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged God's sovereign

will through an unusual experience, we are to acknowledge God's sovereign will through everyday living. James exhorts us that we "ought to say, 'If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that'" (James 4:15). We are not to take for granted living another hour, much less traveling, doing business and profiting tomorrow or a year from now. We are not in control of life, God is. Solomon emphasizes man's limitation this way: "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power over the day of death..." (Ecclesiastes 8:8). We can so "will" our lives in the direction of eating well, exercising regularly, and resting sufficiently, but on our day - when we take our last breath, we cannot "will" another day or even another breath. Like everyone else, we will be just another example of the reality of God's "sovereign will".

God's eternal plan of saving man from sin has been executed in time according to God's will. Salvation in Christ is "according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will..." (Ephesians 1:11). Jewish and Roman authorities, delivering up Jesus to die on the cross, were all part of God's will

and plan in saving us from our sins. Peter reveals this fact: "...Him being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay..." (Acts 2:23; cf. Acts 4:27-28). No one can thwart God's will, not even "lawless men". God's will is so sovereign, that even men's choices to do what is wrong do not overcome it, but fulfill it.

God not only reveals His "sovereign will", but has made His "moral will" known in Scripture. The Jews, choosing to deliver up Jesus to die; and Roman soldiers, obeying the orders to drive the nails into Jesus' hands, were carrying out God's "sovereign" will. But they were setting aside, and disobeying God's "moral will". In the Old Law, God made his "moral will" known: "...the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked" (Exodus 23:7).

We will be held accountable for disobeying God's revealed "moral will" (1 John 3:4, 2 Corinthians 5:10). Submit to God's "moral will" while you have breath before you experience God's "sovereign will" in death!