

# The Permissive Will of God

**Opening Comments:** The words: **Permissive Will of God** are not found anywhere in Scripture

It is a phrase that is the 'conclusion of a principle' arrived at from the overall study of God's Word from Genesis thru Revelation

## **Prelude:**

It is good for us to do as Job did in Job 40:1-4 after the finite Job questioned the infinite God:  
After the less than all knowing Job questions the all knowing God  
After the 'I'm only present here in this spot' Job questions the omnipresent God of the universe.  
After the one who only lived say 100 years confronts the one who always was, is and will be

What did he do after God started speaking to him out of the whirlwind in **Job 38:1?**

**Chapter 40:1** Moreover the Lord answered Job *again*, and said:

**2** "Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct *Him*?

He who rebukes God, let him answer it."

**3** Then Job answered the Lord and said:

**4** "Behold, I am vile;

What shall I answer You?

I lay my hand over my mouth.

-We do well to start our teaching of the **Permissive Will of God** with our hands over our mouths and the ears of our mind and heart wide open.

The first and last Scripture we need to hear tonight is: **Rom. 11:33-36**

**33** Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

**34** "For who has known the mind of the Lord?

Or who has become His counselor?"

**35** "Or who has first given to Him

And it shall be repaid to him?"

**36** For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. And everyone says: **Amen.**

So it begins....

Let's First Look at the Word: '**Will**'

**Will** is that faculty in a rational, conscious being by which he or she has power to choose a course of action and continue in it. Consideration should be given to two general divisions of this Biblical doctrine:

## **Will of God and the Will of Man**

### **1. Will of God**

**His will is superior to all others:**

-The scope and strength of 'wills in the universe' is in direct proportion to the authority & strength of Sovereignty that a being has or has been given.

**show chart:** 'God is the Overall Sovereign Will' of the universe and especially my universe

-The will of God is either **Active** or it is **Permissive**.

He is at all times actively involved in His world, down the hairs on our heads

-Yet He is also **permissively** active in His world.

He permits others to act within a limited sovereignty that He has given to them.

-Fact: No human will was ever created to defeat the will of God, but rather the human will is one of the instruments by which God can realize His purposes for a fallen humanity.

## 2. Will Of Man.

a. On the human side, apart from Biblical understanding, mankind looks upon its will as unlimited.

b. On the divine side, man's will and the power to do what is willed by man is looked upon as under superior control or boundaries, with the saved under the sovereign control of God by the choice of the saved (Phil. 2:13).

**Phil. 2:13** for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.

and the unsaved under like control of Satan (Eph. 2:1-2, 1 John 5:19).

**Eph. 2:1** And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, **2** in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

**1 John 5:19** We know that we are of God, and the whole world *continuously lies under the sway or grip of the wicked one.*

**1. THE DIVINE RECOGNITION OF THE CREATURE'S FREE WILL.** It is evidently the purpose of God to secure a company of beings for His eternal glory who are possessed of that moral virtue which is the result of a free-choice victory over evil by faith.

-When was man first given permission to do what he wanted to do?

-in the perfect environment of the sinless Garden of Eden

-This was the second time God permitted a created being to act freely of their own free will.

-the first was by an Angelic being named Lucifer

-But it should be observed, man cannot make choice between good and evil unless evil exists.

**-The Evils that existed before man chose to disobey His creator was from two sources:**

1-It was from the former Lucifer who approached the woman as a 'serpent' or shining one whom the Holy Spirit thru Paul 1Tim. 2:14 tells us: **14** And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

**Rev. 20:2-3** Describes this deceiver so we know exactly who was the serpent, the deceiver.....

He (*an angel*) laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the Devil* (*accuser*) and Satan (*adversary, resistor*), and bound him for a thousand years; **3** and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished.

-So the Serpent, literally 'the shining one', or Satan or the Devil was one source of evil

#2-The other source is God Himself: everybody gasp!!!

-God cannot sin and therefore cannot do evil, nor does He tempt anyone to sin or commit evil.

-BUT He does create the consequences for committing sin and evil, and the consequences are called evil as well. **Is. 45:7**.....

**Is. 45:7** I form the light and create (*bara*) darkness,

-one application of this is found in Matt. 25:30 Jesus is speaking and He says.... **And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness (there is a darkness which is outer). There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'**

-Further down in Matt. 25:41 Jesus talks about the same place but He describes it differently: **41 "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:**

-Who prepared it? Jesus did..... who for initially? The Devil and his angels! Others will be cast there as well

-This preparation was before Adam and Eve chose to follow evil

**Back to Is. 45:7....**

**I make peace and create (*bara*) calamity or more often evil**

-Here calamity or evil is the consequences of sin, the consequences of not making peace with God, with refusing His peace offering thru the righteous blood of Jesus Christ.

-Death and all of its forerunners are the consequence of sin, but those consequences were created prior to God permitting man to sin.

-He said to Adam in the day you choose, and I will permit you to make a choice, to sin against me thus: 'dying you shall surely die'. Death is a consequence of sin....

-Romans 5:12 tells us this when man chose to sin against God in a perfect environment: **12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—**

Finishing Is. 45:7

**I, the Lord, do all these *things*.'**

The Lord does and the Lord permits evil, permits us to make choices

### **A Closer Look at the Will of God**

**1.** The will of God is either what may be called **directive** as to direction or action or it is **permissive**.

-For Adam and Eve it was both **Directive** and yet He **permitted** them the choice:

-Do not eat of this tree. If you do know the consequences: dying you shall surely die!

**This Directive will.** This form of the divine will includes within its scope the doctrines of decree, election, predestination, and foreordination.

-The Bible speaks of the "will of God" in several different ways, and it is important to understand the differences.

**Under Directive Will of God we have several sub categories:**

**(1) The decreed will of God.** This is God's eternal, foreordained plan and purpose, which will not change and cannot be thwarted by any other 'will'.

- It includes our salvation (Ephesians 1:3-6, etc.) and His choice and calling of Israel (Romans 11:1-2, 29).
- God's unconditional covenanted purposes and promises are a part of His decree, and He will not and cannot "change His mind" about these things.

**(2) There is what we might call the "preceptive will" of God.** This is God's will, expressed in the form of laws, principles or precepts given to men.

- The command not to murder lets us know it is God's will for us not to murder others.
- The command not to steal makes it clear that God's will for us is not to steal.  
If I say, "I feel that it is God's will for me to rob banks, and to kill those who get in my way", we can confidently say that it is not God's will because His written Word says it is not His will...
- In this sense, many people are seeking God's will when it is already obvious. You don't have to pray about living with your boyfriend; God has spoken (Heb. 13:4, 1Cor. 6:9-20).

**(3) There is also God's preferential (or desired) will.** This has to do with what gives God pleasure, and what does not give Him pleasure.

- We know that God loves to show mercy, and yet He will execute judgment (Exodus 34:6-7).
- He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 33:11)
- He is not willing that any should perish but all come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9)  
-This verse is not His decreed will but preferential or desired will.....
- God takes pleasure in the salvation of sinners; He does not take pleasure in pouring out His eternal wrath on sinners (Matt. 18:14; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9; Ezekiel 18:32; 33:11).

#### **Application to us....**

- When we come to things which are not clearly prescribed as sin, or things which are commanded, our desire should be to do that which pleases God (Romans 12:1; Colossians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 5:9; Ephesians 5:10).
- Man's highest end is realized when he conforms to God's will.
- Even Christ came not to do His own will, but only the will of the Father.

#### **Under our second subdivision of God's Will we have His Permissive will**

- The primary subject of tonight's study

**b. Permissive.** In the permissive will of God He is seen allowing man his own choice of that which might be might be evil choices or even second-best choices.

Under permissive will we have several sub categories:

#### **There is what we call God's permissive will regarding evil.**

- This is what God allows, even though it is sin.
- The presence of sin in the universe is due to the fact that God permits it.
- Revelation in the Word of God states that no manifestation of sin is possible outside the permissive will of God,
- BUT He is Himself ever free from the slightest complicity with the evil which He permits.

- No one was ever tried for permitting only doing is tried
- It must serve some justifiable purpose which purpose is attainable in no other way
  - otherwise God would not have permitted it,
  - or if it served no purpose though having permitted it, He would now terminate it without delay.
- The divine purpose relative to sin has not been clearly revealed, and, doubtless, the human mind could not comprehend all that is involved.
- He did not create it, but He did create sinless, perfect beings who were capable of not loving Him and thus bring sin and its consequences into their sphere of life.
- He restrains evil by limiting its boundaries, its depths.....:
- When contending with Jehovah about Job, Satan recognized that he needed the sovereign permission of God with respect to evil when he said to Jehovah, "Put forth you hand **of restraint** now, and you touch all that he (Job) has, and he will curse you to you to your face."
- likewise 2 Thes. 2:7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now **restrains** *will do so* until He is taken out of the way.
- Likewise Jesus said we are to be light (that exposes) and salt (that restrains) in the world
- Jehovah answers Satan regarding Job...
  - In response to this challenge, Jehovah said to Satan, "All that he has (allowed limitations) is in your power; only upon himself, his person put not (not allowed limitations) forth your hand."
- Thus under specific sovereign restrictions Job passed from the hand of God to the limited hand of Satan.
- But when the calamity fell on Job, the Lord said: "You (Satan) tried to move me against him, to destroy him without any cause," Jehovah disclaimed any responsibility for the evil, but He permitted it.
- God has not been overtaken with unexpected disaster in respect to His holy purposes by permitting sin to exist first:
  - 1- in the heart of Lucifer in the Angelic realm and then
  - 2-in the world in the actions of Adam the created son of God, made in His image.
- Nor is He now desperately seeking to salvage something out of an surprising unforeseen wreckage.
- God could not devise anything more worthy of Himself than that which is now in process in this world
- the ultimate triumph which is yet to be, will glorify God with a glory otherwise unattainable, and in this glory others will share.
- Beyond the present tragedy of sin is the final triumph of good and righteousness.

#### **On the other hand...**

- God permitted sin in spite of His holy hatred of it,
- and in spite of His own anticipation of the fact that it would not only bring untold suffering and eternal ruin to His creatures whom He would love,
- and in spite of the fact that it would cost Him the sacrifice of His own Son.

**-To respond that He should not have allowed sin and evil is answered by these facts:**

- 1-Mankind would not have then been made in His image, because the image of God includes the choice to love Him or not
- 2-Mankind would not start out in sinlessness as the Son of God, a title of the first Adam
- 3-We would have just been an animal or some other created living form, but not sons and daughters of God.
- 4-When sin enter by us we ceased to be sons and daughters and became 'offspring'.
- 5-Faith in Christ redemptive work has given us the right to once again become sons and daughters of God.
- 6-But He does not restore what sin has marred, He creates new Sons and Daughters that are born from above that live inside of sinful bodies in a sinful world, awaiting the completion of the redemption process.

-There is, however, a redemptive purpose with its unsurpassed glories developed from the sin of man;  
-In all contemplation of the question of the divine permission of sin in the earth, there are two facts which abide, and to these the mind of faith must cling without wavering:

#1-sin is everywhere and always exceedingly sinful, and God's condemnation of it is never diminished for He cannot be lenient toward sin; and

#2-God is Himself holy and perfect in all His ways. "In him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

-“God cannot be tempted with evil, neither does He tempt any man to sin” (James 1:13).

-And related to this is the fact that God is good and only good, and He is the only one who is good both in His nature and actions

**Examples of God Using the Permissive Will of Men to Fulfill His Decrees**

-God permitted Joseph's brothers to betray him, and to deceive their father, so that He might bring the Israelites (few in number) to Egypt, where God would spare them, and they would greatly multiply thru forced segregation (Genesis 50:20).

-God permits man to exercise his own will and reject the gospel,

-God permits man to willfully disobey His laws, to persecute the righteous, and so on.

-But in all of this, God is still in control, and His purposes are being accomplished.

-His "decreed will" often allows or permits (under His 'Permissive will') men to violate His preferential will (what gives Him pleasure) and 'His Preceptive will' as stated in His Word.

**-God's permissive will is never outside His decreed will.**

God "permits" those things which will lead to the accomplishment of His decreed will.

-What event was the greatest meeting of the Decreed Will of God and the Permitted Will of Man?

-The cross of course!

-One verse will suffice where we see the decreed will of God meets the permitted will of men:

**-Acts 2:23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;**

## **How does God's Permissive will apply to the Christian?**

**(1) God's "directive will."** This is God's personal guidance in our lives.

- There are times when God wants us at a certain place, doing a certain thing.
- The Bible most often will not provide us with this direct and personal revelation of His will in undecreed areas.
- we can see it in the direct guidance of Philip (Acts 8:26) and of Peter and Ananias (Acts 10:1-23).
- God does guide us personally and directly,
  - thru a variety of means that will not violate His preceptive will nor
  - This seems to be required at certain points of our life, when specific guidance is needed (see also 1 Timothy 4:14?).

**(2) There may be yet another category, that we might call the "discerned" will of God.**

- This is our perception of God's will for our life, which comes through wisdom.
- Proverbs for example give great guidance in the 'discerned' will of God
- The discerned will of God is often referred to God principles by which we make decisions and live
- God's revealed will is the standard with which to measure all that we may estimate to be right in motive, design, and execution.

## **Chafer gives Seven Reasons which have been put forward as to why God has permitted sin:**

I will talk about one of them: #6

**The following are some of the reasons which have been advanced for the divine permission of sin:**

**1. THE SPECIFIC VALUE OF REDEEMED BEINGS.** According to the Scriptures, God is not revealed as One who seeks to avoid the issues which arise because of the presence of sin in the universe. He could have created innocent, unfallen beings possessing no capacity to sin; but if He desires redeemed souls purified by sacrificial blood and purchased at infinite cost, the expression of such love and the exercise of such sacrifice are possible only when sin is present in the world.

**2. THE ACQUISITION OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE.** The creatures of God's hand must, by a process of learning, attain to that knowledge which God has possessed eternally.

- They can learn only by experience and revelation.
- Even Christ, on the human side, was made perfect through suffering, and though He were a son, yet learned He obedience through the things which He endured.
- There is no intimation in any Scripture that there was the slightest taint of evil in Him, or that He needed to learn the deep reality of sin.
- On the other hand, man must learn concerning both good and evil. He must realize the sinfulness of sin if he is to attain in any degree to the knowledge God possesses; but he cannot attain to such knowledge unless sin exists as a living reality which is ever demonstrating its sinful character.
- At this point it is reasonable to inquire, How far in the experience of sin and its consequences must humanity go in order that the knowledge of sin may be attained?

-The answer to this question is not easily formed. It is evident that man learns the reality of sin both from the suffering which it inflicts and from the revelation of it in others and concerning the judgments God imposes upon those who sin.

-If man is to learn his lesson well, the suffering cannot be diminished nor can the judgments of God be reduced.

-We conclude, therefore, that if man is to attain to the knowledge of good and evil, there must be evil in the world with all its tragic effects as well as the prospect of divine judgment for sin.

**3. THE INSTRUCTION OF ANGELS.** From certain Scriptures (Eph. 3:10; 1Pet. 1:12) it is possible to conclude that angels are observing men on the earth and learning important facts through the present experience of human beings.

-It would be as necessary for angels to learn the truth regarding that which is evil as it is for them to learn the truth regarding that which is good, but the acquiring of the knowledge of evil through human experience must be denied the angels unless evil is permitted as an active principle in the universe.

**4. THE DEMONSTRATION OF THE DIVINE HATRED OF EVIL.** It is evidently of measureless importance for God to demonstrate His hatred of evil.

The Apostle declares that God was "willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known" (Rom. 9:22);

-but no judgment, wrath, or power in relation to sin could be disclosed apart from the permitted presence of active sin in the world.

**5. THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTS OF ALL EVIL.** Far beyond the mere details of the expression of sin is the essential fact of the *principle* of evil which, if it is to be judged by God, must, evidently, be brought out into an open demonstration of its actual character.

-Such a demonstration could not be secured with sin existing as a hypothetical issue. It had to become concrete and prove its unlikeness to God. As has been observed under the study of satan, the creature's proposal must always be put to an experimental test; and Satan's purpose to construct a *cosmos*, such as now exists, is being tested to the end that it may be judged in all its veritable wickedness.

What the judgment and complete disposition of every form of evil will mean to the absolute tranquility of yet future eternal ages, is but partially declared in the Word of God.

That reality which was anticipated in the divine mind in eternal ages past and that has wrought such ruin in its experimental demonstration in time, by righteous judgments will have been outlawed from God's presence and from His creation forever.

**6.** the greatest of all reasons for the Permissive Will of God is there existed in God that which no created being had ever seen, before God Permitted Sin....

-The angelic hosts had seen His wisdom, His power, and His glory, but they had never seen His *grace*.

-They had no conception of the goodness of God to the undeserving.



- They may have seen something of His love, but love and grace are not the same.
- God might love sinners upon whom, but for a lack of a redeeming, reconciling, and propitiatory sacrifice, He was in no way righteously free to bestow His benefits.
- By one marvelous act of mercy in the gift of His Son as a sacrifice for sinners, He opened the way for the exercise of His **grace** toward those who, because of their sin, deserved only His **wrath**.
- But there could be no exercise of divine grace toward the sinful and undeserving until there were sinful and undeserving beings in the world.
- Thus it is declared that the revelation of divine grace in the ages to come with all its marvelous import (Eph. 2:7) demanded that there should be objects of grace, and this, in turn, allowed the permission of sin in the world.
- This same truth is presented again in a slightly different form and from the human side by Christ. He, when speaking to Simon concerning the woman who had bathed His feet with her tears, said, "Wherefore I say unto you, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; (and how do we know this? He continues..) for she loves much: but to whom forgiveness is a little thing, the same will love a little" (Luke 7:47).
- Thus, though it is impossible for a creature to understand how a holy God could permit sin, either in heaven or on earth, it is evident that the realization of His greatest purposes necessitates its permission.

### **The Christian's Sin is Model of Our Dilemma with Permitted Sin**

- The entire problem is illustrated to a limited extent in the experience of a Christian who has sinned.
- He first admits that God, who could have hindered the sin, but did nevertheless permit it.
- He likewise recognizes that he has profited in the ways of understanding and experience by the sin; and, finally, he admits that God, though permitting the sin, is in no way complicated with its guilt and wickedness.

Again the last message for this evening is again:

The first and last we need to hear tonight is **Rom. 11:33-36**

**33** Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

**34** *"For who has known the mind of the Lord?  
Or who has become His counselor?"*

**35** *"Or who has first given to Him  
And it shall be repaid to him?"*

**36** For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. And everyone says:  
**Amen.**

# God is the Overall Sovereign Will

He is the Largest 'S'

In His Sovereign Will God has Created Small 'S' Sovereign Wills  
& Permitted their Good and Evil

In the World

