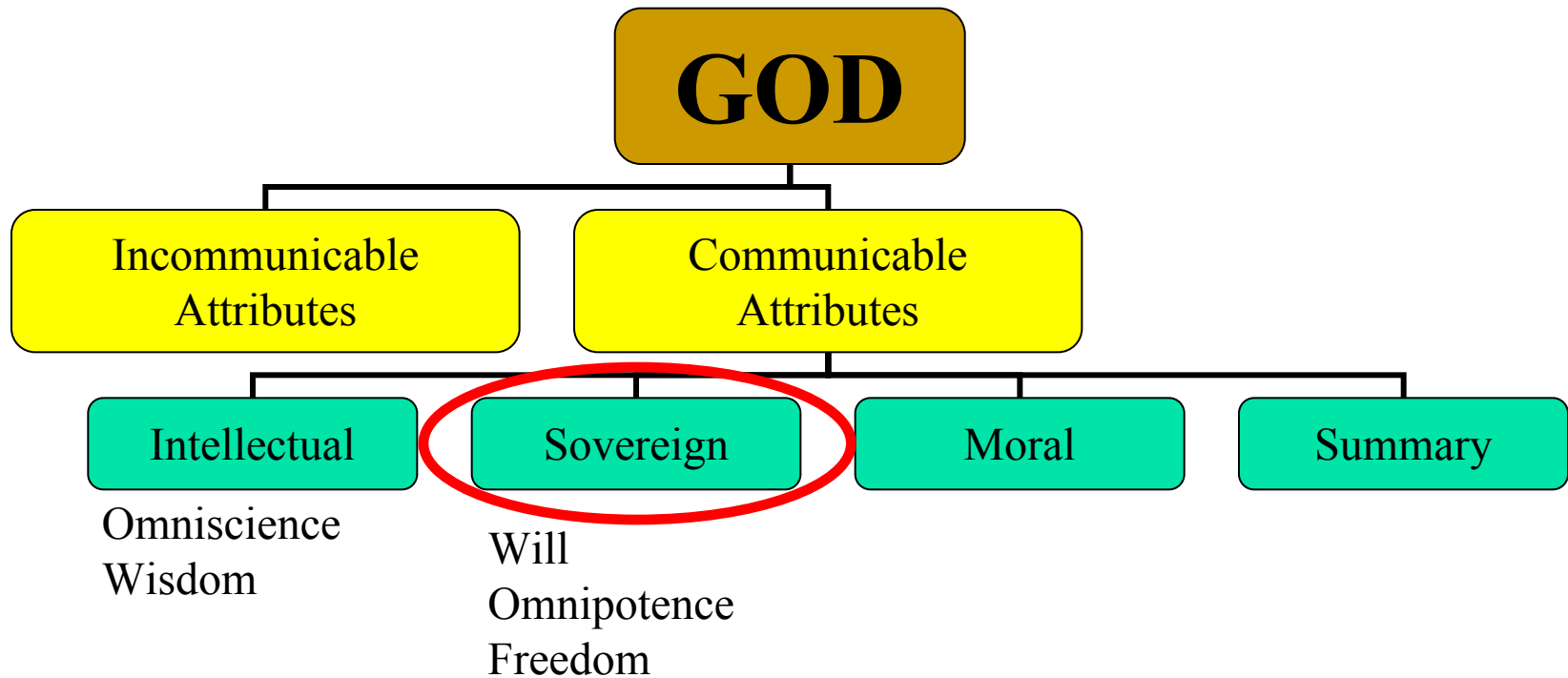


Behold Your God, Part 6: The Will and Decrees of God



Classifying the Attributes of God





What is “the will?”

- “The will is the faculty of choice, the immediate cause of all action. In every act of the will there is preference—the desiring of one thing rather than another. To will is to choose, and to choose is to decide between alternatives.”

--A.W. Pink



What is “the will?”

- The will is what causes us to choose one thing over another, it is the **faculty** of choice



What is “the will?”

- The will, in and of itself, is not the final **determiner**. It is not have the final say.
- There are higher faculties which influence the will
 - Desire
 - Conscience
 - Character
 - Nature



What is “the will?”

- **Jonathan Edwards** says in the *Freedom of the Will*: “The Determination of the Will, supposes an effect, which must have a cause. If the Will be determined, there is a Determiner. It is that motive, which, as it stands in view of the mind, is the strongest, that determines the will.”



What is “the will?”

“That which determines the will is that which causes it to choose. If the will is determined, then there must be a determiner. *What is it* that determines the will? We reply, the strongest motive power which is brought to bear upon it. What this motive power is, varies in different cases. With one it may be the logic of reason, with another the voice of conscience, with another the impulse of emotions, with another the whisper of the tempter, with another the power of the Holy Spirit; whichever of these presents the *strongest* motive power and exerts the *greatest* influence *upon the individual himself*, is that which impels the will to act.”

--A.W. Pink

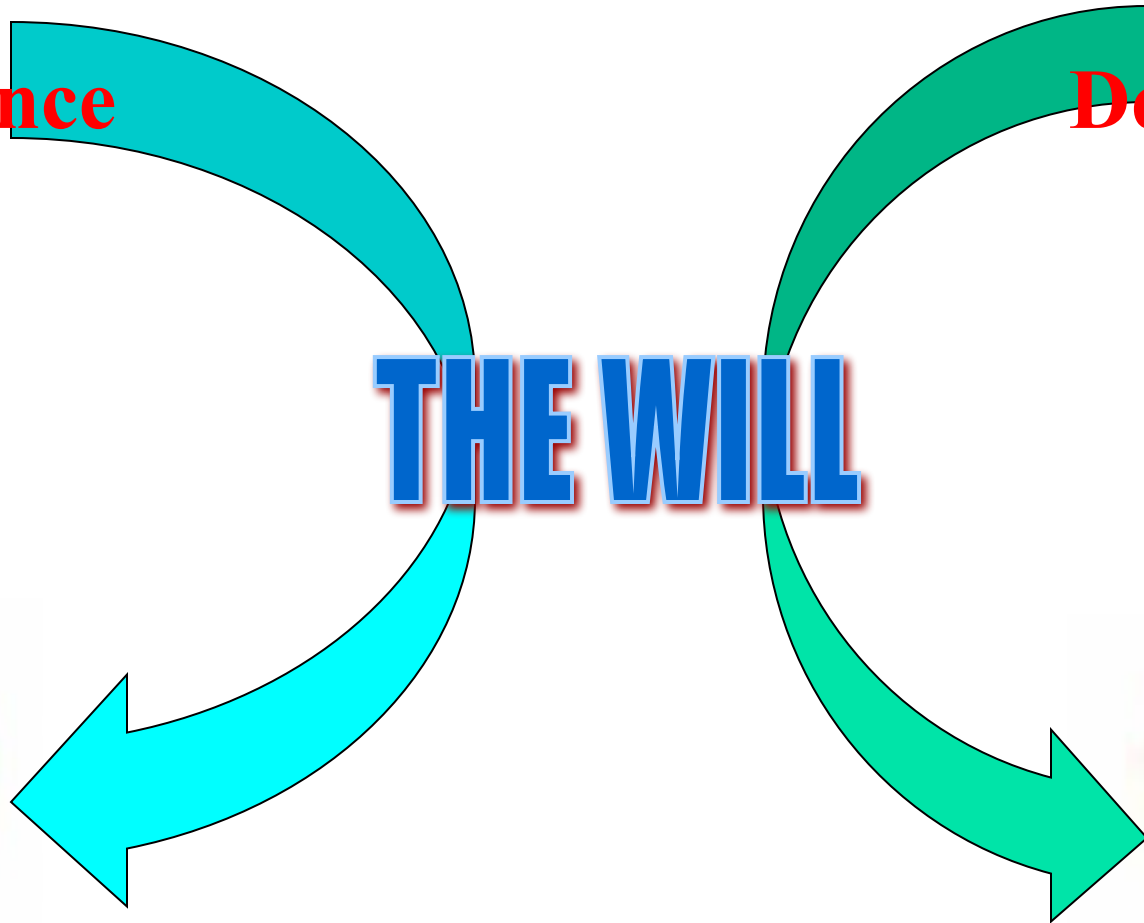


What is “the will?”

Conscience

Desire

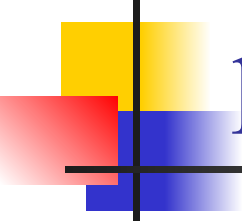
THE WILL





What is “the will?”

- Freedom of Inclination
 - A person’s will always acts freely and is never externally forced, but it always acts consistently with his or her own **nature**.
 - You always choose according to your greatest **desire** or strongest inclination
 - Matthew 7:15-20



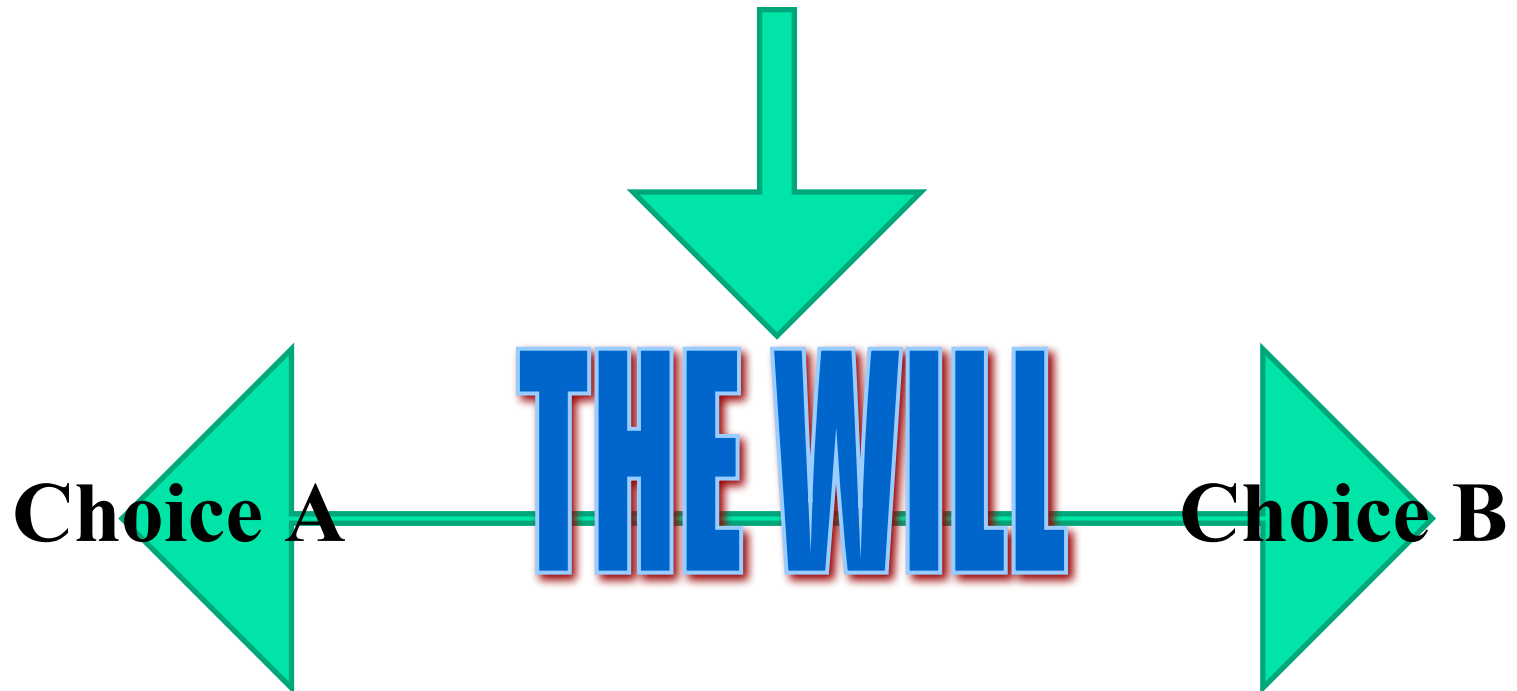
The will of the unregenerate person

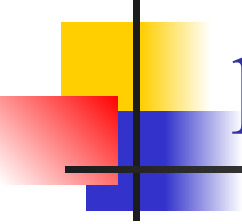
- The will of the unregenerate person is in **bondage to sin**
- All of our higher faculties are in bondage to sin

The will of the unregenerate person

DEPRAVED

Desires Conscience
Nature Character

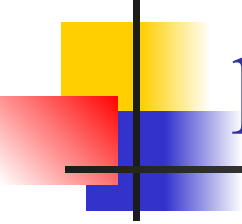




The will of the unregenerate person

- The will of the unregenerate person is in **bondage to sin**
- All of our higher faculties are in bondage to sin
 - **Titus 3:3:** “enslaved to various lusts and pleasures.”
 - **John 8:34:** “slaves of sin.”
 - **Romans 3:12:** “there is none who does good, not even one.”

The will of the unregenerate person



- Unregenerate man would never choose God because unregenerate man does not desire God
 - **Romans 3:11:** “There is none who seeks for God.”
 - **Romans 8:7:** “the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God.”
- Only after a person is **born again** can they desire God



The Two Wills of God

Will of Command

Preceptive Will

Revealed Will

Will of Decree

Decretive Will

Secret Will



The Two Wills of God

“We must certainly distinguish between what God *would like to see happen* and what he *actually does will to happen*, and both of these things can be spoken of as God’s will.”

--I.H. Marshall



The Two Wills of God

Will of Command

Preceptive Will

Revealed Will

*What God would **like to see** happen*

Will of Decree

Decretive Will

Secret Will

*What God **actually does will** to happen*



The Two Wills of God

Will of Command

Preceptive Will

Revealed Will

What God would like to see happen

Will of Decree

Decretive Will

Secret Will

What God actually does will to happen



The Two Wills of God

- Will of Command/Preceptive Will
 - Example: 10 commandments are the Moral Law/Precepts of God
 - **1 John 2:17:** "The one who does the will of God abides forever."



The Two Wills of God

Will of Command	Will of Decree
Preceptive Will	Decretive Will
Revealed Will	Secret Will
<i>What God would like to see happen</i>	<i>What God actually does will to happen</i>



The Two Wills of God

- Will of Decree/Decretive Will
 - **James 4:15:** “you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.”
 - **1 Corinthians 4:19:** Paul says, “I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills.”



The Two Wills of God

Will of Command

Preceptive Will

Revealed Will

What God would like to see happen

Will of Decree

Decretive Will

Secret Will

What God actually does will to happen



The Two Wills of God

- Example of the secret will vs. the revealed will:
 - **Deut 29:29:** “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.”



The Two Wills of God



John Wilkes Booth



Abraham Lincoln



The Two Wills of God

- Example: the death of Christ
- God's will of command:
 - Thou shalt not murder
- God's will of decree
 - **Isaiah 53:10:** "It was the will of the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief."



The Two Wills of God

- **1 Timothy 2:4:** “God desires (or wills) all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”



The Two Wills of God

- God's will of command:
 - **Acts 17:30:** “God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent.”
- God's will of decree:
 - **Matthew 11:25-26:** “At that time Jesus said, “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants, for such was your gracious will.”

John Piper: “Both Calvinists and Arminians affirm two wills in God when they ponder deeply over 1 Timothy 2:3-4. Both can say that God wills for all to be saved. But then, when queried why all are not saved, both Calvinist and Arminian answer that God is committed to something even more valuable than saving all. The difference between Calvinists and Arminians lies not in whether there are two wills in God, but in what they say this higher commitment is. What does God will more than saving all? The answer given by Arminians is that human self-determination and the possibility of a resulting love relationship with God are more valuable than saving all people by sovereign, efficacious grace. The answer given by Calvinists is that the greater value is the manifestation of the full range of God’s glory in wrath and mercy (Romans 9:22-23) and the humbling of man so that he enjoys giving all credit to God for his salvation.”



The Decrees of God

- **Westminster Shorter Catechism:**
 - Question 7. *What are the decrees of God?*
 - A. The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.
 - **Ephesians 1:11:** God “works *all things* according to the counsel of his will.”



The Decrees of God

- **1689 London Baptist Confession, Chapter 3, Paragraph 1:** “God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein.”



The Decrees of God

- “In Himself, Freely”
- God’s decree is
 - Independent
 - Not conditional on anything



The Decrees of God

- Eternal: has no beginning
 - **Psalm 33:11:** “the counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation.”



The Decrees of God

- “most wise and holy counsel of His will.”
- “unchangeable.”
 - **Malachi 3:6:** For I *am* the Lord, I do not change.”



The Decrees of God

- “yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein.”
 - God decreed everything that happens, including acts of sin, without sinning
 - **1 John 1:5:** “God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.”
 - **James 1:13:** “God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.”



The Problem of Evil

- Premise 1: God is all-good
- Premise 2: God is all-powerful
- Premise 3: Evil exists
- Conclusion: Therefore, because evil exists, an all-good, all powerful God cannot exist.



The Problem of Evil

- Premise 1: God is all-good
- Premise 2: God is all-powerful
- Premise 3: Evil exists
- Conclusion: *God has a morally sufficient reason for evil: to bring about the greatest **good** and the greatest **glory** for Himself*



The Problem of Evil

Jonathan Edwards: “Evil is an evil thing, and yet it may be a good thing that evil should be in the world...As, for instance, it might be an evil thing to crucify Christ, but yet it was a good thing that the crucifying of Christ came to pass. As man’s act, it was evil, but as God ordered it, it was good...And if so, then it is a good thing that that evil comes to pass. When we say the thing is an evil thing in itself, then we mean that it is evil, considering it only within its own bounds. It implies no contradiction to suppose that an act may be an evil act, and yet that it is a good thing that such an act should come to pass.”



The Problem of Evil

- God has a narrow angle lens
 - The event **in isolation** → Evil
- God has a wide angle lens
 - The event in the **whole context** of eternity → Good



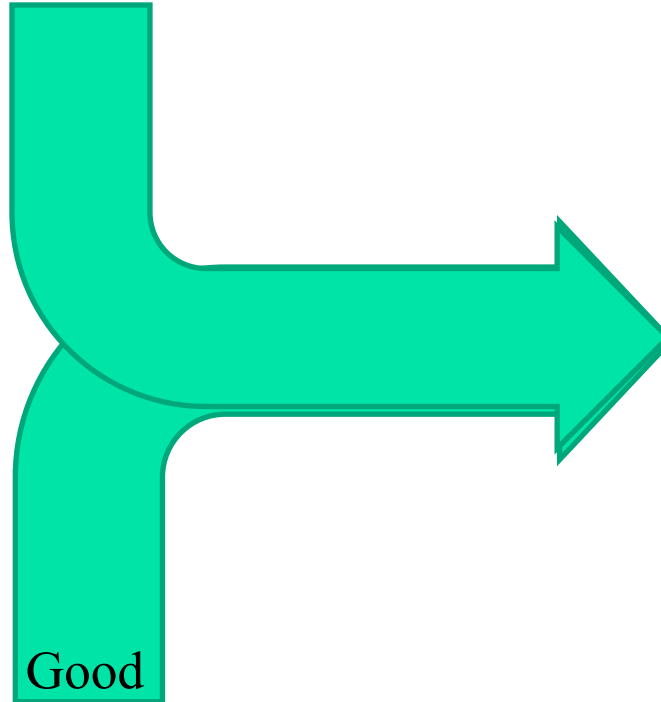
The Problem of Evil

- **Genesis 45:5:** “Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.”
- **Genesis 50:20:** “As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.”



The Problem of Evil

Intention:
Joseph's brothers: Evil



Event: Joseph
sold into slavery

Intention: God's decree



The Problem of Evil

- Usually we read this verse as: “you meant it for evil, but God *turned* it for good.”
- But Scripture says: “you intended this evil for evil, but God intended this evil for good.”



The Problem of Evil

- We must learn to have a **corporate** view of the decrees of God for our lives