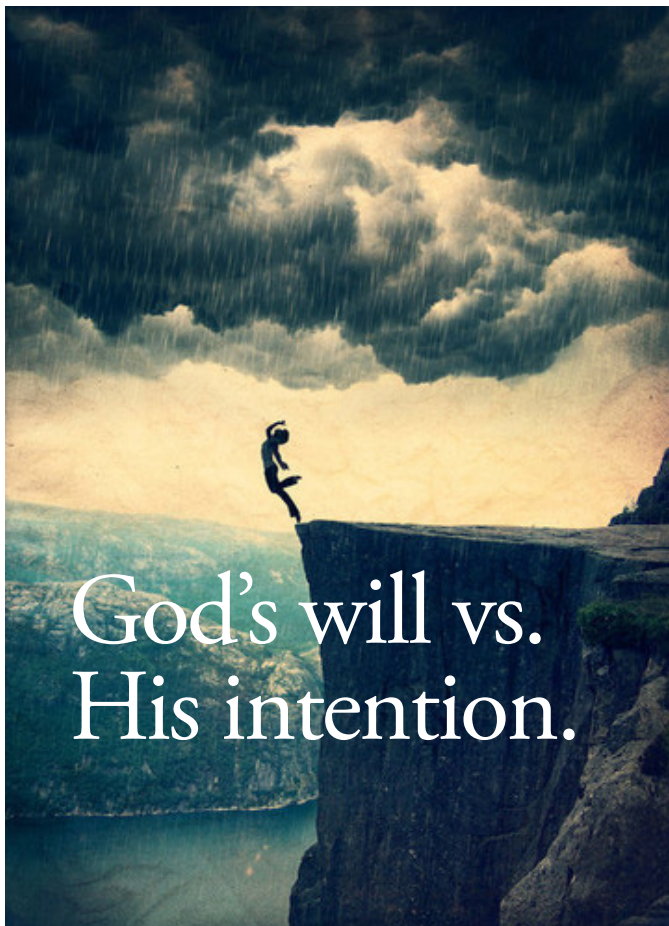


ROMANS Part 88

Chapter 9:19



19 You will be protesting to me, then, “Why, then, is He still blaming? for who has withstood His intention?”

No one has ever withstood God’s intention. Plenty of people have withstood His will, but only when He has intended for them to do just that. Thus, God’s intention is unwithstandable and

unavoidable. Even those who are adamant that they are withstanding His intention fall headlong into it, as everyone does. No one can outsmart God.

What is the difference between God’s will and His intention? God’s will is what He says that He wants, but His intention is what He *really* wants. Does God oppose Himself? It only looks that way.

Let’s suppose that a parent wants to teach a child what is in the child’s heart. The parent sets a cookie jar on the table within reach of the child and says, “I do not want you opening that cookie jar without my permission.” The parent then waits around the corner for the inevitable to happen, and it does happen: the child breaks into the cookie jar. One might say that the parent wanted it to happen. Of course. It is essential to the lesson, however (the lesson of willful disobedience) that the parent first prohibit the act.

THE CROSS

The best example of this principle in the Scriptures is the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The law said, “Thou shalt not commit murder” (Exodus 20:13). This was God’s own law. But then Peter lifts the veil on God’s intention, praying on the Pentecost following Jesus’ resurrection (Acts 4:27-28)—

For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

It was God’s counsel and His foreordained plan for the crucifixion to occur. We all know this. The Lambkin was slain from the disruption of the world (Revelation 13:8). Therefore, God caused people to withstand His will (“don’t murder”) in order to fulfill His intention (the murder of His Son). The action of forbidding and



then causing this infamous murder has a two-fold blessing: 1) the world gets saved, 2) the killers eventually confront their own national disobedience, are delivered of self-righteousness (there is no relief without deliverance), and find an eternal life with God that will feel good (1 Corinthians 15:21-28) in proportion only to the preceding failure and angst.

THE LAW

God gave the law and challenged Israel to do it. Exodus 19:3-6—

Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, “This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”

God did this, knowing the whole time that Israel could not fulfill the law. In fact, God later revealed through Paul that the law came so that the Israelites

would offend Him more, not less. Romans 5:20—

Yet law came in by the way, that the offense should be increasing. Yet where sin increases, grace superabounds.

God caused an entire nation to oppose His will (“do law”) in order to fulfill His intention (to disobey it). Why was disobedience of the law God’s intention? The verse previously quoted contains the answer: “Where sin increases, grace superabounds.” God wanted sin to increase so that

“God caused an entire nation to oppose His will in order to fulfill His intention.”

He could demonstrate grace. Israel does become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, but God becomes the source of this blessing, not human endeavor, putting the human in a reclining position to enjoy the grace, otherwise the human is working and failing and we’re back to this current wicked eon. Additionally, the human is delivered of self-righteousness. There is no sweetness of deliverance without bondage to corruption, and self-righteousness is one of the worst forms of corruption. Romans 11:32—

For God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all.

Stubbornness must precede mercy, else mercy has no meaning.

ADAM

God forbade Adam and Even from eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Seeing as how the Lambkin was slain from the disruption of the world, it ought to be evident that God planned all along for Adam and Eve to eat the very fruit that He forbade: no sinning Adam, no saving Christ. Proof of God's intention—as opposed to His will—is found in Romans 8:20-21—

For to vanity was the creation subjected, *not voluntarily, but because of Him Who subjects it*, in expectation that the creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

In the Garden of Eden, God comes off surprised and shocked at the first couple's failure because that's what He does when He's condescending to people: He jumps into their world and reacts to either their sins or to their successes. He does this to elicit feelings from His creatures, creating passions in them necessary to their education. This charade in the Garden at being angry about something that He wanted to happen belongs to the human learning process. But now that I'm

WE MAY BE OKAY
IN THE "INTENTION"
DEPARTMENT.

“To God, Adam's disobedience was a necessary evil. God was looking ahead, obviously, to the cross.”

reading what I just wrote, I'm wondering if God's anger can honestly be called a charade. To God, Adam's disobedience was a necessary evil, yes. He's looking ahead, obviously, to the cross and to the salvation of the world—that's true. He has to have the disobedience in Eden to set-up the deliverance at Calvary. But I can't really say that God *enjoys* the disobedience. So why shouldn't He be angry? The charade comes in, perhaps, with the surprised tone of voice: “What have you done?” That's a charade, without a doubt. But the anger—perhaps *that* is real. I'm thinking this through now. Well, no, upon further consideration, I don't think the anger is real, either. It has to be a pose. It's a pose for the sake of Adam and Eve, to elicit from them a pang of regret that will in turn produce the pang of need, which God will

amply fulfill in due time. Need of what? A Savior.

This need, of course, has been passed on to us.

God is perfectly permitted to elicit emotions in this way from His creatures when the ultimate goal is the blessing of these same creatures. When we're finally freighted with the fruit of God's plan, we will be glad for whatever means God used to get us there. We'll be glad that God played upon whatever of our emotions was necessary, by whatever means, to produce the reactions essential to our ultimate and eternal pleasure.



GREEK WORDS AND DEFINITIONS

The Greek word for “will” is *thelema*, while the Greek word for “intention” is *boulema*. The King James Version translated *thelema* “will” sixty-two times. Of the three occurrences of *boulema* in the New Testament, they translated it “will” twice, including in Romans 9:19. Translating two different Greek words with the same English word is a crime. It cross-wires God's thoughts. Is it any wonder that readers of the King James version have no idea of the difference between God's will and His intention?



KING JAMES.

Nice try. The Concordant Version didn't do much better on Ephesians 1:11.

WHAT ABOUT EPHESIANS 1:11?

Ephesians 1:11 says, “God is operating all in accord with the counsel of His own will.”

This verse contains a form of both *thelema* and *boulema*. “God is operating all in accord with the counsel (*boule*) of His own will (*thelema*).” If this verse had left out “counsel” (*boule*), then the verse would have read, “God is operating all in accord with His will,” which of course is not true. God is operating a lot of things that are contrary to His revealed will.

I introduce the word “revealed” here because, instead of contrasting God’s will with His intention, some people like to say that they are contrasting God’s “revealed will” with his “hidden will.” That’s fine. It’s the same idea. God’s revealed will is what He says He wants to happen, whereas His hidden will is what He really wants to happen. One might say, then, that there are two aspects to God’s will: the revealed and the hidden. I can live with that. “Intention” is simply a Scriptural way of saying “hidden will.”

The key in Ephesians 1:11 is the presence of the word “counsel.” This word saves the day. I’ll tell you how in a moment. But to be honest with you, I don’t know why the Concordant Version didn’t just translate *boule* “intention” here instead of “counsel.” It’s the same root word (*boule*) as the word translated “intention” in Romans 9:19. The only difference is that “intention” in Romans 9:19 adds the suffix *ma*, which carries the thought of “effect.” *Boulema*, then, would be the effect of God’s intention, and not the intention itself. A long and awkward way of saying it would be, “this thing that just happened (*boulema*) was perfectly in accord with what God wanted to happen (*boule*).” My point is that we’re still in the realm of intention, so why not

avoid confusion and translate consistently, keeping the root word? To emphasize the addition of the *ma*, why not, in Romans 9:19, translate *boulema* “intention-effect”? “**Why, then, is He still blaming? for who has withstood His intention-effect?**” Who can withstand something that has already happened? What happens, of course (*boulema*), is the result

of what God *wants* to happen (*boule*).

“The *counsel* of His own will,” then (Ephesians 1:11), is that part of God’s will that is hidden, which is to say His intention. It’s not *just* the will in view here, but the intention of the will. Here is where I would have translated *boule* “intention,” as in, “God is operating all in accord with the intention of His own will.” Again, it is not simply God’s will under consideration (for this might be confused with his revealed will), but it is the *intention* of His will by which He is operating all. It is that part of His will that He determined beforehand to occur, and not merely that part where He says what He wants to happen but really doesn’t.

REST IN IT

Let us not resent the fact that God announces things that He *says* He wants, but ultimately does only those things that He *truly* wants. The purpose of saying one thing and doing another—when God does it—is the furthest thing from hypocrisy. The secret to understanding this is to analyze motive. Hypocrisy among humans carries in the very hardness of the word’s consonants the virus of trickery. And not just trickery, but trickery for selfish gain. No such vile motives attend the divine interplay of will and intention. Thus, God’s use of saying one thing and doing another cannot be called hypocrisy. God’s motive is always and ever will be the education and ultimate blessing of His creatures.

In the department of blessing the fruit of His hands, only God knows what He’s doing. Humans? Not so much. I say we let God do what He wants. Only God knows the best methods that will produce the best outcomes for the darlings of His heart.

After all, He’s God. —MZ