

III. The Permissive Will of God

a. Definition –

- i. God has given mankind free will and therefore has allowed man the opportunity to follow along with or reject His desirous will. The believer can act contrary to God’s desirous will for their lives.

1. The Apostle Paul’s Call to the Gentiles –

- a. Chosen by God to go to the Gentiles

- i. Acts 22:12-15 – Saul was chosen to experientially know God’s desirous will
 - ii. Acts 9:15-16 – to share the message of Christ to the Gentiles and the children of Israel
 - iii. Acts 13:47 – Paul and Barnabas stopped preaching to the Jews because of their resistance to the Gospel and because God commanded them to go to the Gentiles
 - iv. Acts 26:14-17 – Christ sent Paul to the Gentiles

- b. Paul personally recognized God’s call to go to the Gentiles

- i. Galatians 1:15-17 – Paul recognized that God’s when he was saved
 - ii. Romans 11:13 – Apostle of the Gentiles
 - iii. Romans 15:16 – Minister of Christ to the Gentiles

- c. The Early Church recognized God’s call to go to the Gentiles

- i. Galatians 2:7-9 – James, Peter, and John recognized Paul’s call to the Gentiles at the Council of Jerusalem

2. The Apostle Paul’s desire to see the Jewish people saved

- a. Romans 9:1-3 – Paul’s soul was stirred up about the Jews spiritual condition

- b. Acts 19:21 – Paul “*purposed in the spirit*” to go to Jerusalem

- i. Purposed – *etheto* – “to propose to oneself something” (Thayer)

- ii. Context points to this being Paul’s spirit and not the Holy Spirit

3. The Apostle Paul disregards the leading of the Holy Spirit

- a. Acts 20:22-23 – Although warned by the Holy Spirit, Paul was determined to go to Jerusalem

- b. Acts 21:4 – Spirit led believers in the city of Tyre warned Paul not to go to Jerusalem

- c. Acts 21:11 – Agabus prophesied that Paul would be imprisoned if he went to Jerusalem

- d. Acts 21:12-14 – Paul’s fellow missionaries as well as believers in Cesarea intreated Paul to change his mind about going to Jerusalem but Paul refused

- e. Acts 21:20-26 – Paul compromised Grace teaching
 - i. Jewish believers were still zesty for the Law and Temple worship
 - ii. Paul taught that it was not necessary to abide by the Mosaic Law
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 7:19; Galatians 5:16, 6:15 – circumcision confers no benefit in Christ
 - 2. Galatians 5:1 – the believer in Christ is freed from the bondage of the Law
 - iii. James pressured Paul to take an OT vow to prove he was a Law abiding Jew
 - iv. Similar to Peter in Galatians 2, Paul gives in to legalistic pressure and acts inconsistent with Grace teaching
- f. Acts 22:17-21 – While Paul was in the Temple, the Resurrected Christ instructed him to leave Jerusalem immediately and go to the Gentiles
 - i. Paul argued with the Lord – self-justification
 - ii. Paul’s refusal to leave resulted in his arrest and imprisonment
 - iii. The Jewish people refused to listen to his message, instead they tried to kill him
 - iv. Acts 24:27 – Paul left in jail for 2 years with limited contact
- ii. God does not write off a believer when they do not pursue His desirous will for their lives
 - 1. Acts 23:11 – Christ immediately comforted Paul in prison, *“Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.”*
 - 2. Philippians 1:6 – *“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will (continuously) perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:”*
 - 3. Philippians 3:13 – *“...but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,”*
- iii. God will even use the consequences of a believer’s willful choices to bring about His glory (see the Prison Epistles)
 - 1. Ephesians - The Mystery of the Church, Spirit-filling, and the Armor of God
 - 2. Colossians - The Mystery of *“Christ in You”* and Spirit-filling
 - 3. Philippians - *“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection”*, Paul
 - 4. Philemon - *“Grace makes all conformity to the will of God voluntary”*, Lewis S. Chafer