

**Grace Bible Church
Tree of Life
A Weekly review
07/18/2010**

**Point 5 in our study of the Doctrine of the Divine Decree is: The will of God –
Directive, Permissive, and Overruling.**

Directive will of God: This will of God is what God desires us to think, do, and where to go. This is focused on believers since the unbeliever has but one directive from God – believe on the Lord Jesus and be saved. We will break up the directive will of God into seven categories.

- 1. It is the will of God that every member of the human race be born again.**
- 2. It is the will of God that all believers be experientially sanctified.**
- 3. It is the will of God that all believers be controlled (filled) with the Holy Spirit.**
- 4. It is the will of god that we give thanks in everything.**
- 5. It is the will of God that believers suffer.**
- 6. It is the will of God for every believer to trust the Lord.**
- 7. It is the will of God for every believer to be productive.**

The permissive will of God: Where negative volition in man is permitted to act contrary to the will of God. Man goes negative against His directive will. God is a gentleman; He does not coerce human volition. He disciplines for disobedience, but does not force obedience except in extreme cases. Man often operates under the lust of his old sin nature and therefore uses negative volition to disobey God. While God in righteousness does not violate human volition so as to coerce man, God in justice disciplines disobedience. Often we try to somehow entice God to come over to our view and He's not buying it. Example: wrestling Jacob. His directive will is His sovereign will and it is perfectly righteous and holy and God will never agree with anything that goes against it.

However, it is proof of the existence of human free will and God's recognition of it that we are often allowed to act against God's perfect will. A great example of this is in the history of Balaam.

So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the *fees for* divination in their hand; and they came to Balaam and repeated Balak's words to him. (Num 22:7-12)

Balak is the Moabite king who unites with the Midianites to do something about these new people that have arrived. The Jews have defeated the strong Amorites and have settled in the Jordan valley and both the Midianites and Moabites consider them dangerous.

**And he said to them, "Spend the night here, and I will bring word back to you as the LORD may speak to me." And the leaders of Moab stayed with Balaam. Then God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?" And Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent *word* to me, 'Behold, there is a people who came out of Egypt and they cover the surface of the land; now come, curse them for me; perhaps I may be able to fight against them, and drive them out.'" And God said to Balaam, "Do not go with them; you shall not curse the people; for they are blessed." (Num 2:8-12)
Notice the command: "Do not go with them;"**

So Balaam arose in the morning and said to Balak's leaders, "Go back to your land, for the LORD has refused to let me go with you." And the leaders of Moab arose and went to Balak, and said, "Balaam refused to come with us." Then Balak again sent leaders, more numerous and more distinguished than the former. And they came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak the son of Zippor, 'Let nothing, I beg you, hinder you from coming to me; for I will indeed honor you richly, and I will do whatever you say to me. Please come then, curse this people for me.'" And Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, either small or great, contrary to the command of the LORD my God. And now please, you also stay here tonight, and I will find out what else the LORD will speak to me." (Num 22:13-19)

Well the Lord was quite clear: "don't go with them." Yet here lies a wonderful little game that man plays with God – the I know, but...game. It is a subtle form of self-justification, where you know what the word of God says concerning a certain thing, but you look for the tiniest loop-hole somewhere so that you may justify your lust. In self-justification, duty is no longer a simple, imperative thing, but something that may be conjured with, a subordinate, unstable tool for your own use instead of an absolute law. A believer who attempts this will blind himself to the simplicity of God's commands and only complicate the matter to his own hurt.

Having thus blinded himself as to the nature of duty in God's directive will, there will no longer be any certainty in his doctrinal operations; confusion of thought leads to confusion of action; in his own transformation he transforms God; he now hears God bidding him do what he desires to do. Balaam wants to go because he wants the money so God allows him to and this is God's permissive will.

And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men have come to call you, rise up *and* go with them; but only the word which I speak to you shall you do." (Num 22:20)

Balaam was operating on materialism lust from his old sin nature; therefore, he used his negative volition to disobey the will of God. If God should violate the free will of Balaam, then God is not glorified. God cannot be glorified by coercion. God has put His essence on the line in reply to accusations against Him that He is not who He claims to be. If He just forces men to obey Him, though He could, then He doesn't reveal His essence, neither to the elect or the fallen. Balaam sees riches upon riches already in his possession. Little does Balaam know that this is the permissive will of God and not His directive will. Balaam should have never gone to God for an alternate answer the second time, but God will allow it, and God will be glorified even more through Balaam's negative volition. God always has a purpose in His permissive will that will bring glory to Himself while the creature is disciplined. So we don't get away with anything and it is always a far, far better choice to choose for God's directive will. God is not content for us to remain spiritual children all of our lives. His Spirit will convict us to grow up and start applying so that we live according to our election.

So Balaam arose in the morning, and saddled his donkey, and went with the leaders of Moab. But God was angry because he was going, and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as an adversary against him. Now he was riding on his donkey and his two servants were with him. When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand, the donkey turned off from the way and went into the field; but Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back into the way. Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path of the vineyards, *with* a wall on this side and a wall on that side. When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she pressed herself to the wall and pressed Balaam's foot

against the wall, so he struck her again. And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn to the right hand or the left. When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam was angry and struck the donkey with his stick. And the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, “What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?” Then Balaam said to the donkey, “Because you have made a mockery of me! If there had been a sword in my hand, I would have killed you by now.” And the donkey said to Balaam, “Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I ever been accustomed to do so to you?” And he said, “No.” (Num 22:21-35)

Notice that Balaam is not astounded by the fact that the donkey spoke. There are several interpretations to this. Some say that since Balaam was a diviner that he was used to hearing animals talk and they reference Satan speaking through the serpent in the garden. Some say that the donkey doesn't necessarily speak with words but with the usual sounds of a donkey and Balaam the diviner can interpret them. Some say that this was all a dream that Balaam had the night before, and in dreams we are not surprised by talking animals, and as a diviner God would speak to him in a dream, but there is no indication in the text that this is a dream; in fact the opposite is said; Balaam arose in the morning saddled his donkey and left. Some say that Balaam was so consumed with the pursuit of riches and so angry that the donkey would not obey that in his incredible lust and rage that he never thought to consider that his donkey could talk. I find this to be the best explanation.

We have to go straight to the literal interpretation of the scriptures, which states that the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey and whether Balaam heard it in his mind or audibly doesn't matter.

The fact that Balaam isn't surprised doesn't really matter. Is everything recorded? Are all the emotions of Balaam recorded? Might Balaam have sat there in bewilderment for some time before talking back to the donkey? It was a female donkey; did it have a female voice? Balaam's emotional response is not the issue and that's why I believe it isn't recorded. But what is recorded is a simple truth. Christ as the Master of Balaam was faithful and served him just like this donkey had always done. When God told him not to go he went anyway. When the donkey did not want to go Balaam struck her and went anyway.

Balaam becomes a cruel master by striking the donkey three times and even desiring to kill him. He said that he would have killed the donkey if he had a sword. Well guess who has a sword – the Lord Jesus Christ in theophany standing in his way. Balaam had three opportunities to turn back when the donkey wouldn't go. Balaam is now blinded by lust. How many times have we as believers headed towards an evil that our conscience tells us we should not do, but our lust takes over. On the way toward that evil certain “events” occur that remind us that this is not the path we should be on. We question for a while as we go back and forth, and for an instant start to obey our conscience. However we push it back and hurl ourselves head long into the evil, justifying in blinding lust.

When our spiritual eyes are blinded by lust or gain we then fail to see the Lord standing in our way, pleading us not to pursue these things, but rather allowing Him to be our Shepherd and by following Him the promise is that goodness and prosperity will pursue us (Psa 23). God allows the pursuit of evil and God will discipline it and all of it will ultimately glorify Him but not the creature. If we continue towards evil after warning discipline God will turn up the discipline to intensive levels, not out of anger, but out of love for the creature and justice for the Creator. God's justice is not allowing Israel to be cursed at this

time and so it will not be and then enters in the overruling will of God – Balaam you’ve gone as far as you are going to go and now you’re going to go to do My will.

Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed all the way to the ground. And the angel of the LORD said to him, “Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out as an adversary, because your way was contrary to me. But the donkey saw me and turned aside from me these three times. If she had not turned aside from me, I would surely have killed you just now, and let her live.” And Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, “I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the way against me. Now then, if it is displeasing to you, I will turn back.” But the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, “Go with the men, but you shall speak only the word which I shall tell you.” So Balaam went along with the leaders of Balak. (Num 23:31-35)

So now we have the overruling will of God. The overruling will of God involves divine frustration of satanic will. Satan desired to curse Israel and God would not permit it.

Then the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth and said, “Return to Balak, and you shall speak thus.” So he returned to him, and behold, he was standing beside his burnt offering, he and all the leaders of Moab. And he took up his discourse and said, “From Aram Balak has brought me, Moab's king from the mountains of the East, Come curse Jacob for me, And come, denounce Israel!” “How shall I curse, whom God has not cursed? And how can I denounce, whom the LORD has not denounced? As I see him from the top of the rocks, And I look at him from the hills; Behold, a people *who* dwells apart, And shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, Or number the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the upright, And let my end be like his!” Then Balak said to Balaam, “What have you done to me? I took you to curse my enemies, but behold, you have actually blessed them!” And he answered and said, “Must I not be careful to speak what the LORD puts in my mouth?” (Num 23:5-12)

Balak takes Balaam to another place to overlook another portion of Israel hoping that Balaam would curse them, but again Balaam blesses them.

Num 23:25-26

Then Balak said to Balaam, “Do not curse them at all nor bless them at all!” But Balaam answered and said to Balak, “Did I not tell you, ‘Whatever the LORD speaks, that I must do?’” (Num 23:25-26)

Balaam blesses them yet again and then prophesies the destruction of Balak and actually prophesies the coming of David and Messiah. It’s an amazing turn around from the initial desire of Balak to curse his enemies, Satan to curse Israel, and Balaam to get rich. “You were all against Me,” God said, “but nothing you do will stop My purpose. I have decreed it to be so. Not only have you not accomplished your will, but I have actually used you to prophecy the coming of My servant David and his greatest Son, My Son, Messiah!” Israel is blessed by the Lord in the land, but notice what they do.

While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. For they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and the LORD was angry against Israel. (Num 25:1-3)

Once again, as so often we see of the people of God, God allows evil, but disciplines it and overrules it in His perfect timing.

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