

I Have Come To Do Your Will, O God

By Nathan Warner

*“You said in your heart, **I will** ascend to heaven; above the stars of God **I will** set my throne on high; **I will** sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; **I will** ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will** make myself like the Most High.”*

(Isaiah 14:13-14 ESV)

There is God’s will and there is “I will.” The “I will” always leads away from God’s will in our lives because it puts the focus on us and not on God. “I will” is an arrogant act of disobedience as we see in the first great disobedience – that of Lucifer, described above. To be disobedient requires us to know the difference between our will and the will of the one who commands us. If we know the will of God, and we are commanded to follow, then any subsequent action will either be in obedience or disobedience. There is no middle ground. If we act in our own will, we are always disobeying the will of the Father. If we follow His will, we obey God and “*are saved through faith*” (Ephesians 2:8b) by the Grace of God through Jesus Christ.

In Isaiah, we see the King of Babylon’s conduct compared to Lucifer’s disobedience and rebellion against God when he determined to follow his will instead of God’s will. Lucifer wished to come out from under God’s authority and make himself like God. What a sad echo of this we have in Adam and Eve’s disobedience in the garden.

*“The serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God**, knowing good and evil”* (Genesis 3:4-5).

Adam and Eve were tempted to come out from under God’s authority and become like Him, so they could be under their own authority. Mankind constantly strives to determine its own course and to become its own authority, throwing off the authority of God to carry out its will in disobedience to God. *“Like Adam they transgressed the covenant; there they dealt faithlessly with me”* (Hosea 6:7). In Scripture, we see that disobedience never ends well.

In Adam and Eve’s case, their disobedience meant *“sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned”* (Romans 5:12).

For all of Lucifer’s volition, his vows, and his determination, we read: *“How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!...you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit. Those who see you will stare at you and ponder over you: ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities, who did not let his prisoners go home?’”* (Isaiah 14:12, 15-17)

The plague of disobedience enters everywhere, drawing mankind into vain rages against God’s authority. In Psalm 2, David describes the kings of the earth following the example of Lucifer and Adam by vainly plotting to throw God’s authority off from them. *“Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, ‘Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.’”* (verse 1-3)

God’s response is probably much the way it was to Lucifer’s arrogant disobedience: *“He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, ‘As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.’”*

I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession...'” (Psalm 2:4-8).

Just as Lucifer, these kings cannot set themselves as rulers in Zion, for God has decreed His choice for King. As much as Lucifer willed to make himself a ruler like God, he could not. Unlike Lucifer and all mankind, Jesus alone is crowned King on Zion – King of Kings and Lord of Lords. What is the difference?

Jesus repeatedly declared in action and in word that He was not serving His own will: *“the Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise”* (John 5:19). Even knowing the terrible, humiliating death that was required of Him, if He obeyed, He told the Jews, *“When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing on My own authority, but speak just as the Father taught Me”* (John 8:28).

In Hebrews, we see that *“when Christ came into the world, He said, ‘Sacrifices and offerings You have not desired, but a body have You prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings You have taken no pleasure. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book’”* (Hebrews 10:5-7).

This is the way that Jesus taught His disciples to live – to do nothing of our own accord or authority but everything as the Father teaches us (John 14:21-25) – to obey God’s will. Paul exhorts the Philippians to have the same mind as Christ, *“who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men”* (Philippians 2:6-7). What a contrast we have in Jesus to all that has ever been or will be – for He alone is the Son of God! What an example to follow! What an amazing difference He makes! Through Him, we have the right to be called Children of God by His Will alone.

As believers, we are *“born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God”* (John 1:13). The will of the flesh is at enmity with God: *“For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please”* (Galatians 5:17). *“Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God”* (1 Peter 4:1-2).

Even Believers are sometimes guilty of claiming to follow God’s will but actually follow their own will. In Psalm 101, David makes some pretty serious “I will” vows about how he will perform his office as King of Israel. Many of these vows should make Believers cringe, especially since they know what follows.

*“I will sing of steadfast love and justice;
to you, O LORD, I will make music.
I will ponder the way that is blameless.
Oh when will you come to me?
I will walk with integrity of heart
within my house;
I will not set before my eyes
anything that is worthless.*

*I hate the work of those who fall away;
it shall not cling to me.
A perverse heart shall be far from me;
I will know nothing of evil.
Whoever slanders his neighbor secretly
I will destroy.
Whoever has a haughty look and an arrogant heart
I will not endure.
I will look with favor on the faithful in the land,
that they may dwell with me;
he who walks in the way that is blameless
shall minister to me.
No one who practices deceit
shall dwell in my house;
no one who utters lies
shall continue before my eyes.
Morning by morning I will destroy
all the wicked in the land,
cutting off all the evildoers
from the city of the LORD.”
(Psalm 101)*

What a testament to our sinful nature that David violated every single one of his core “I will” statements in his ungodly lust for Bathsheba in his own house, in his wicked adultery, in his deception, in his conspiracy to murder, and in that evil murder itself of such a faithful man as Uriah. David became the wicked in the land that he swore to destroy morning by morning – he became the evildoer he vowed to cut off. To read this Psalm with that in mind is heartbreaking.

This Psalm is not a hymn to the Lord but rather a hymn to David’s will. He is not praising God here, nor contemplating God’s will; instead, David is emphasizing what *he* will do as King, and though a good thing to aim for, he is making a law to follow unto himself. As we know from Scripture, the law brings death (1 Corinthians 15:56). Only grace can save us through our repentance – David understood this. In his Psalm of repentance, he cries: *“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love, according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!...Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit...The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise”* (Psalm 51:1-2, 10-12, 17).

David was a man after God’s own heart. He was a man of repentance, who repented of the will of his flesh. This is the greatest lesson we can learn from him. To live our lives in constant repentance for our sinful, fleshly will – not to live our lives in self-righteousness that says we need not repent nor in a guilt that has no relief. Let us present our broken, contrite hearts to God that He may wash us from our iniquity. Let us put to death the disobedient “I will’s” that attempt to accomplish our salvation by our own hands and say, instead, with Jesus, “I have come to do **your will, O God.**”

Let us pray with David that the only “I will” we allow in our lives is “I will obey”: *“I said, ‘I*

will confess my transgressions to the LORD, ' and You forgave the iniquity of my sin" (Psalm 32:5b).

"But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God."

(Ephesians 2:4-8)