

THE WILL OF GOD, Week 6

Doing the Will of God in the Kingdom of God under the Government of God for the Church as the Israel of God

Scripture Reading: 1 John 2:17; Matt. 7:21; 1 Pet. 1:17; 2:24; 5:6-7, 10; Gal. 6:10, 15-16

1 John 2:17	And the world is passing away, and its lust, but he who does the will of God abides forever.
Matthew 7:21	Not every one who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.
1 Peter 1:17	And if you call as Father the One who without respect of persons judges according to each one's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear,
1 Peter 2:24	Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness ; by whose bruise you were healed.
1 Peter 5:6	Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time,
1 Peter 5:7	Casting all your anxiety on Him because it matters to Him concerning you.
1 Peter 5:10	But the God of all grace , He who has called you into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground you.
Galatians 6:10	So then, as we have the opportunity, let us do what is good toward all, but especially toward those of the household of the faith.
Galatians 6:15	For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation is what matters.
Galatians 6:16	See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand.

Accomplishing the Will of God

“I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me” (John 5:30).

Doing the will of God means **to not seek, follow, or accomplish** our own will but **to only seek, follow, and accomplish God's will.** People often say that they have prayed and that they are clear that the will of God is for them to go to a certain place or for them to do a certain thing. Some say that it is God's will for them to run a business. Some say that it is God's will for them to get married. But is this reliable? Is the one who thinks that he is acting according to God's will consecrated to God, and is he living for God? Is he truly not seeking, following, or accomplishing his own will but seeking, following, and accomplishing God's will? This is not a small matter. Many who claim to be acting according to the will of God are not truly practicing the will of God, because **they have not consecrated themselves to Him to live for His will.** They still hold on to themselves, keep things in their own hands, and live according to their own will.

A person who truly does the will of God does not seek his own will. **He only seeks the will of God.** This was the Lord Jesus' pattern when He was on earth as a man. In all human history, **only Jesus the Nazarene sought only the will of God and not His own will.** Although He was one with God and equal to God, He willingly came to earth and stood in the position of one who was sent to do the will of God. In all things He only sought the will of Him who sent Him; He did not seek His own will. This is the meaning of doing the will of God.

(Crucial Truths in the Holy scripture, vol. 2, chapter 26, section 1)

Proving the Will of God

“That you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect” (Rom. 12:2).

Understanding the will of God involves **proving.** To prove is to search for the good, well pleasing, and perfect will of God in everything. In order to prove the will of God, **we need to stand in a position of consecration, to not follow the age of the world, to be renewed in our mind according to the Word of God, the Bible, and to understand the sense in our spirit and the condition of our environment.** Searching out God's will in everything involves discerning the motive, goal, and nature of things. Therefore, we must stand on God's side in the reality of our consecration, be absolutely outside this age, and see God's view according to a mind that has been renewed and taught by God. We must always use the clear teachings, principles, and examples of the Bible to measure and prove the will of God and to see whether or not our ways are one with the will of God. We must use the sense in our spirit to test and judge what is according to the will of God. We also should consider whether or not the environment confirms what we have realized. If we are willing to prove the will of God in this manner, it will not be difficult for us to understand the will of God.

Having a Heart to Do the Will of God

“If anyone resolves to do His will, he will know” (John 7:17).

If anyone **resolves**—has a **heart**—to do God's will, **he will know God's will.** If we want to understand the will of God, we must not only have a heart to understand but also a heart to do His will. God is not willing to reveal His will to those who do not have the heart to understand, nor does He want to reveal His will to those who have the heart to understand but not a heart to do it. **Only those who have the heart to both understand and do the will of God can gain a revelation of God's will from Him.** Therefore, we must resolve to do God's will if we want to understand the will of God.

(Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, vol. 2, chapter 26, section 3)

Day 1

I. We need to do the will of God in the kingdom of God—Matt. 7:21; 12:50:

- A. “He who does the will of God **abides forever**”—1 John 2:17:
 1. The **world** is **against** God the Father, and the **things in the world** are **against** the will of God—vv. 15-16:
 - a. On the **positive** side, **we have the Father and His will**.
 - b. On the **negative** side, **we have the world and the things in the world**.
 2. We need to do the will of God **habitually and continually**, not just occasionally; this is indicated by the fact that the Greek verb for does in verse 17 denotes doing (things) habitually and continually by abiding (in the things).

Day 2

- B. In order to **enter into the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens** in the coming age, we must do the will of our Father in this age—Matt. 7:21-23; 6:10; 12:50; Rev. 4:11; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 1:5, 9, 11; 5:17; Col. 1:9; 4:12:
 1. The kingdom is absolutely a matter of God’s will and completely fulfills God’s will; in fact, the **kingdom is God’s will**—Matt. 6:10.
 2. The ultimate issue of the constitution of the kingdom of the heavens is the **will of the heavenly Father**—7:21.
 3. As the **kingdom people**, **we are on earth to do the Father’s will**—v. 21; 12:50.

Day 3

4. In order to do the will of the Father, **we need to enter in through the narrow gate and walk on the constricted way**—7:13-14:
 - a. The **narrow gate** excludes the old man, the self, the flesh, the human concept, and the world with all its glory; **only that which corresponds with God’s will can enter in**.
 - b. As we walk on the constricted way, **we are restricted** by a mysterious, invisible, inward control, and we live under this control.
5. Whoever does the will of the Father is a **relative of the Lord Jesus**—12:50:
 - a. Christ, the heavenly King, always submitted to the Father’s will, taking God’s will as His portion and not resisting anything—11:28-30; 26:39.
 - b. Whoever does the will of the Father is a **brother** who helps the Lord Jesus, a **sister** who sympathizes with Him, and a **mother** who tenderly loves Him.
6. The **Father’s eternal will** is to **build up the church upon Christ the Son as the rock**—16:18; Eph. 2:21-22; 4:16.

A LIFE UNDER GOD’S GOVERNMENT

In verse 23 Peter goes on to say concerning the Lord, “*Who being reviled did not revile in return; suffering, He did not threaten, but kept committing all to Him who judges righteously.*” According to the usage of the verb “kept committing” in Greek, “all” needs to be inserted here as its object. This word refers to all the sufferings of the Lord. He kept committing all the insults He suffered and all His injuries to Him who judges righteously in His government, to the righteous God, to whom He submitted Himself. This indicates that the Lord recognized God’s government while He was living a human life on earth.

I am somewhat concerned that in your reading of this verse you may not pay attention to the word “**judges**.” We are accustomed to saying that we commit things to the Lord who is faithful or merciful or kind. Have you ever said, “I commit everything to God who judges righteously”? I do not think that many of us have had this practice. The reason we do not pray like this is that our prayer, expression, and utterance are still too traditional. This keeps us from applying many of the thoughts and utterances in the pure Word. Therefore, in reading a verse such as 2:23, we may take it for granted and fail to get into the real meaning.

While the Lord Jesus was on earth suffering, He kept committing all to the One who judges righteously. This brief word indicates not only that the Lord lived a life that was a model for us, but also that **He lived a life absolutely under God’s government**. He Himself was always under the government of God, and He committed everything related to Him to God’s judgment.

Peter has already referred to God’s judgment in 1:17: “*And if you call upon as Father the One who without respect of persons judges according to each one’s work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear.*” Here Peter “is not speaking of the final judgment of the soul. In that sense ‘the Father does not judge anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son’ (John 5:22). The thing spoken of here is the daily judgment of God’s government in this world, exercised with regard to His children. Accordingly it says, ‘The time of your sojourning’ here” (Darby). This is God’s judgment on His own household.

Since these two Epistles are concerned with the **government of God**, the **judgment of God** and of the Lord is referred to repeatedly (2:23; 4:5-6, 17; 2 Pet. 2:3-4, 9; 3:7), as one of the essential items. It began from the angels (2 Pet. 2:3-4), and passed through the generations of man in the Old Testament (2 Pet. 2:5-9). Then in the New Testament age it begins from the **house of God** (1 Pet. 1:17; 2:23; 4:6, 17) **and continues until the coming of the day of the Lord** (2 Pet. 3:10), which will be a day of judgment on the Jews, the believers, and the Gentiles before the millennium. After the millennium, all the dead, including men and demons, will be judged and perish (1 Pet. 4:5; 2 Pet. 3:7), and the heavens and the earth will be burned up (2 Pet. 3:10, 12). The results of the varied judgments are not the same. Some judgments result in a disciplinary dealing, some in a dispensational punishment, and some in eternal perdition. However, **by all these judgments, the Lord God will clear up and purify the entire universe so that He may have a new heaven and a new earth for a new universe filled with His righteousness** (2 Pet. 3:13) **for His delight**.

(Life-Study of 1 Peter, chapter 21, section 1)

Day 4

II. In order to do the will of God in the kingdom of God, we must live the Christian life under the government of God—1 Pet. 1:17; 2:24; 5:6-7, 10:

- A. In his writings Peter combines the Christian life and God's government, revealing that the **Christian life and the government of God go together as a pair**—1:17; 2:21, 24; 3:15; 4:17; 5:5-8:
1. The subject of 1 Peter is the **Christian life under the government of God**, showing us the **government of God** especially in His dealings with His chosen people—1:2.
 2. The subject of 2 Peter is the **divine provision and the divine government**, showing us that as **God is governing us, He supplies us** with whatever we need—1:1-4; 3:13.
 3. **God governs by judging**; this judgment of God is for the carrying out of His government—1 Pet. 1:17; 4:17.
 4. The judgment in 1 Peter 1:17, which is carried out by the Father, is the present, daily judgment of God's governmental dealings with His children.
 5. God judges everything that does not match His government; therefore, in this age we, the children of God, are **under the daily judgment of God**—v. 17.
- B. As **believers in Christ and children of God**, we should live a Christian life under the government of God—John 3:15; 1:12-13; 1 Pet. 4:13-19; 5:6-7:
1. The Epistles of Peter reveal the Christ who enables us to take God's governmental dealings administered through sufferings—1 Pet. 1:6-8; 2:3-4, 19, 21-25; 3:18, 22; 4:1, 15-16; 5:8-9.
 2. In the death of Christ we have died to sins so that in the resurrection of Christ we might live to **righteousness under God's government**—2:24:
 - a. To live to **righteousness** is **to fulfill God's governmental requirements**—v. 24.
 - b. In our Christian life we should live in a way that **matches the righteous requirements of His government**—Psa. 89:14; Matt. 5:6, 10.

Day 5

3. We should be humbled under the **mighty hand of God**, which carries out the government of God—1 Pet. 5:6:
 - a. In verse 6 the **mighty hand of God** refers to **God's administrating hand seen especially in His judgment**—1:17; 4:17.
 - b. To be humbled under God's mighty hand is to be **made humble by God**; however, **we must cooperate with God's operation and be willing to be made humble, lowly, under His mighty hand**—5:6.
4. We should **cast all our anxiety on God** because it matters to Him concerning us—v. 7.
5. We should **commit our souls** to the faithful Creator—4:19:
 - a. God can preserve our soul, and **His loving and faithful care accompanies His justice** in His governmental administration.
 - b. While God judges us in His government, **He cares for us faithfully in His love**; as we are suffering His disciplinary judgment, **we should commit our souls to the faithful care of our Creator**—Matt. 10:28-30; 11:28-29.
6. As we live under the government of God, the God of all grace will Himself **perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground us**—1 Pet. 5:10.

Day 6

III. Doing the will of God in the kingdom of God under the government of God issues in the church as the Israel of God—Gal. 6:10, 15-16:

- A. God's New Testament economy is not only to make us sons of God but also to **make us the Israel of God; the real Israel, the spiritual Israel, is the church**—Eph. 1:5; Heb. 2:10; Rom. 8:14, 19; Gal. 3:26; 4:6-7; 6:16; Matt. 16:18.
- B. We need to become such an Israel, a **prince, to execute God's government on earth**—6:9-10.
- C. The apostle Paul considered the many believers in Christ—who are the household of the faith, the new creation—collectively the Israel of God—Gal. 6:10, 15-16; 3:7, 29.
- D. In God's New Testament economy **we have been made both the sons of God and the Israel of God**—v. 26; 6:16:
1. We are **sons of God**, members of God's family, for His expression—v. 10.
 2. We are **kings-to-be**, those destined to be kings; kingship is related to the Israel of God—Rev. 5:10.
 3. Our destiny is to be sons of God expressing God and also kings reigning in the kingdom of God—21:7; 22:5b; 12:5a.
- E. As the **Israel of God**, we **represent** God, **exercise** His authority, and **carry out** His administration on earth for the fulfillment of His purpose—Gen. 1:26, 28; Luke 10:19; Rev. 12:5, 7-11:
1. God wants His creature man to deal with His creature Satan in order to bring the earth back to God—Psa. 149:7-9.
 2. **God needs man to do the work of God**—to reign over His creation, to proclaim His triumph, and to cause Satan to suffer loss—Gen. 1:26.

TWO KINDS OF LIVING

We who believe in Christ Jesus also have a dual status. On the one hand, we are **sons of God**, members of the divine family. On the other hand, we are **kings-to-be**, those destined to be kings. Kingship is related to the **Israel of God**. We should be not only sons of God, but also the Israel of God. To be proper sons of God it is sufficient to have the fruit of the Spirit, such as those virtues listed in 5:22 and 23. But to be kings, the Israel of God, we need another kind of living, a particular kind of walk by the Spirit. **We need both the living of sons of God and that of the Israel of God.**

Many Christians do not have the **first kind of walk by the Spirit**, much less the second. We thank the Lord that, by His mercy, many in the church life today do have the **first kind of walk by the Spirit to live Christ**. But now the Lord is calling us to go on to have the second walk by the Spirit, the **second kind of living**. This is the living not merely of sons in the divine family, but of **those who will be kings in God's kingdom**. May our eyes be opened to see that we are kings in the royal family! Our destiny is not only to be sons of God; it is to be kings reigning in the kingdom of God.

Do you live in a kingly way? If you live in this way, you will be kingly even when you laugh. If we see that Paul's word about the Israel of God implies that we need a kingly walk, the aspiration to live in a kingly way will be stirred up within us. We may even want to pray, "Lord, cause me to live and walk in a kingly way so that I may be qualified to be part of today's Israel of God."

In a sense, the **nation of Israel is the Israel of God and a testimony of God**, even though many Israelites are rebellious and very sinful. However, the real Israel, the spiritual Israel, is the **church**. But because both the nation of Israel and the church are in a low condition, **there is the need for the Lord to recover the real Israel of God**. For such a recovery, we need two kinds of living, two kinds of walk. In the first walk we shall have such virtues as love, joy, peace, meekness, and longsuffering, all of which are the expression of the Christ who lives in us. We also need the **second kind of walk** so that we may be the Israel of God **bearing God's kingship, representing Him with His authority, and executing His governmental administration**.

These two kinds of walks are illustrated by our life as citizens of the United States. On the one hand, we are persons living in an ordinary way; on the other hand, we are citizens of this nation. As persons, we need to be loving, peaceful, joyful, faithful, and meek. However, in order for the United States to remain a strong nation, we also need to live as good citizens, fulfilling all the requirements of the government. As citizens, we need to pay taxes, serve in the army, and fulfill other obligations. Spiritually speaking, we are both the sons of God and the Israel of God. As sons of God, we need to be loving, joyful, peaceful, faithful, and meek. As the Israel of God, we must walk according to the elementary rules of God's New Testament economy.

Whereas those Christians who truly desire to go on with the Lord usually care only for the first kind of walk and desire to be spiritual, holy, and victorious, **we need to care also for the second kind of walk**. In particular, **we need to care for the church life**. However, many Christians who are "spiritual" or "holy" do not care in the least for the church life. These Christians are interested in prayer, Bible study, gospel preaching, or improving their behavior. According to their concept, this is all that is necessary. But because they do not walk according to the principle of the new creation, it is not possible for them to become the Israel of God.

A NEW CONSTITUTION

The new creation is synonymous with the church. The term the Israel of God is also a synonym for the church. Why, then, did Paul not use the word church in Galatians 6? The answer is that Paul's intention was to point out that **the church is a new creation, a new constitution**. It is especially needful for us today to realize that the church is a new constitution. When we use the word church, many think of a building with a steeple or of a certain religious organization. But according to the Bible, **the church is a new creation**. Because our inner being has been **constituted of the divine nature**, we have become a new creation.

Both the old creation and the new creation are corporate entities. There were not two old creations, and there are not two new creations. Both the old creation and the new creation are uniquely corporate. **We who believe in Christ are all one new creation, just as we are all one church.**

The expression "the new creation" denotes the **nature, the inward and intrinsic organic constituent**, of the church. The church is an organism with an intrinsic constitution. This constitution is the new creation. Paul says that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, neither being religious nor unreligious, avails anything, but only a new creation. By this he means that in the universe the only thing that avails or matters is the intrinsic and organic constitution, involving the mingling of God with man. We need to walk not only with certain virtues that express Christ; we also need to walk according to the principle, the rule, of such a new creation.

(Life-Study of Galatians, chapter 43, section 2)