

The Wills of God

Boulema or Thelema?

There is an incomplete understanding in the Body of Christ concerning the will or wills of God. Some speak of the perfect will of God or His holy will. Then there is His permissive will, believing that God's grace extends beyond human responsibility, (antinomianism) rather than to reckon oneself dead to sin, crucified with Christ yet alive because Christ was raised from the dead, (Romans 6).

The most commonly mentioned Will of God in the life of the Church is the **Sovereign Will of God**. This emphasis is an integral part of Reformed theology and strongly promoted by the NIV Bible "translation" without any Greek justification for adding it to the text. Sure God is sovereign in performing and establishing His purposes. Yet our infinite omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God has in Jesus Christ submitted Himself to deal with finite man in His grace.

Let us look at the two wills of God taught in Scripture.

The Sovereign Will of God: Gr. "Boulema"

God's Will implemented regardless of any agreement or opposition.

God's 'boulema' will is a deliberately directed decree for the purpose of ruling and judging the affairs of unbelieving mankind for His own purpose.

Strong's ref. #1088: **Boulema**, βούλημα { boo'-lay-mah-} will, counsel, purpose, to will deliberately, the deliberate exercise of the will;

Scripture references to the "Boulema" Will of God:

Romans 9:18-- Therefore has He (God) mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardens.

Romans 9:19--You will say then unto me Paul), Why does He (God) yet find fault? For who has resisted His will? (a deliberate design, that which is purposed).

Revelation 17:17--For God has put in their hearts to fulfill His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

Boulomai (βούλομαι, (S. R. #1014), usually expresses the deliberate exercise of and is rendered as follows in the R.V., where the A.V. has "will:" Matt. 11:27 and Luke 10:22, "willeth;" Jas. 4:4, "would;" in Jas. 3:4, R.V., "willeth" (A.V., "listeth"). In Jas. 1:18 the perfect participle is translated "of His own will," lit. 'having willed.'

boulomai (βούλομαι, (1014 it is translated to desire in the R.V. of the following: Acts 22:30; 23:38; 27:43; 28:18; 1 Tim. 2:8; 5:14; 6:9 and Jude 5.

God's, decree (Gr. 1191- 'gnome') is a decree made by God Himself, a resolve of purpose, or an intention that He will carry out in the affairs of this world.

- 1) the faculty of knowledge, mind, reason
- 2) that which is thought or known, one's mind
 - 2a) view, judgment, opinion
 - 2b) mind concerning what ought to be done
 - 2b1) by one's self: resolve purpose, intention
 - 2b2) by others: judgment, advice
 - 2b3) decree

The Desired Will of God: Gr. "Thelema"

God's desired Will for His people through faith in Christ.

1. 'Thelema' will is God's choice, inclination, desire, and pleasure.

God's 'thelema' will is His desired plan for the individual believer and His corporate Body, the Church. Relationship with God is established by grace through faith in His Son Jesus Christ and must therefore be without force or coercion. The blessings in God's desired will are appropriated through the surrender of the believer's will to God's power and wisdom.

Scriptures referring to the "Thelema" Will of God:

Romans 12:2--And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, **will of God.**

Romans 15:32--That I may come unto you with joy by the **will of God**...."

1 Cor. 1:1--"Paul, called an apostle of Jesus Christ through the **will of God**," (2 Cor. 2:1; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 1:1).

2 Corinthians 8: 5--And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the **will of God.**

Matthew 6:10- Thy kingdom come. Thy **will (thelema)** be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.

Phil 2:13- For it is God which worketh in you both to **will (theleo)** and to do of *his* good pleasure.

Ephesians 1:5--Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of **His will.**

1 Peter 4:2--That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh ..., but to the **will of God.**

A. Nouns

1. *thelēma* (θέλημα, (2307)) signifies (a) objectively, that which is willed, of the will of God, e.g., Matt. 18:14; Mark 3:35, the fulfilling being a sign of spiritual relationship to the Lord; John 4:34; 5:30; 6:39-40; Acts 13:22, plural, 'my desires;' Rom. 2:18; 12:2, lit., 'the will of God, the good and perfect and acceptable;' here the repeated article is probably presumptive, the adjectives describing the will, as in the Eng. Versions; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 1:9; 5:17, "of the Lord;" Col. 1:9; 4:12; 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:18, where it means 'the gracious design,' rather than 'the determined resolve;' 2 Tim. 2:26, which should read 'which have been taken captive by him, i.e., by the Devil; the R.V., "by the Lord's servant" is an interpretation, it does not correspond to the Greek] unto His will' (i.e., God's will; the different pronoun refers back to the subject of the sentence, viz., God); Heb. 10:10; Rev. 4:11, R.V., "because of Thy will;" of human will, e.g., 1 Cor. 7:37; (b) subjectively, the will being spoken of as the emotion of being desirous, rather than as the thing willed; of the will of God, e.g., Rom. 1:10; 1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; 8:5; Eph. 1:1, 5, 11; Col. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1; Heb. 10:7, 9, 36; 1 John 2:17; 5:14; of human will, e.g., John 1:13; Eph. 2:3, "the desires of the flesh;" 1 Pet. 4:3 (in some texts); 2 Pet. 1:21.

2. *thelēsis* (θέλησις, (2308)) denotes a willing, a wishing [similar to No. 1 (b)], Heb. 2:4.

C. Verbs.

When "will" is not part of the translation of the future tense of verbs, it represents one of the following:

1) **TELEO** (#2309), usually expresses desire or design; it is most frequently translated by "will" or "would;" see especially Rom. 7:15, 16, 18-21. In 1 Tim. 2:4, R.V., "willeth" signifies the gracious desire of God for all men to be saved; not all are willing to accept His condition, depriving themselves either by the self-established criterion of their perverted reason, or because of their self-indulgent preference for sin. In John 6:21, the A.V. renders the verb "willingly" (R.V., "they were willing"); in 2 Pet. 3:5, A.V., the present participle is translated "willingly" (R.V., "willingly"). The following are R.V. renderings for the A.V., 'will:' Matt. 16:24, 25, "would;" 19:21 and 20:21; "would," 20:26, 27; Mark 8:34, 35; 10:43, 44; "would fain," Luke 13:31; "would," John 6:67; "willeth," 7:17; in 8:44, "it is your will (to do);" "wouldest," Rom. 13:3; "would," 1 Cor. 14:35 and 1 Pet. 3:10.

thelō (θέλω, (2309)), to will, to wish, implying volition and purpose, frequently a determination, is most usually rendered to will. It is translated to desire in the R.V. of the following: Matt. 9:13; 12:7; Mark 6:19; Luke 10:29; 14:28; 23:20; Acts 24:27; 25:9; Gal. 4:17; 1 Tim. 5:11; Heb. 12:17; 13:18.

Notes: (1) In Rev. 4:11 A.V., *thelēma*, a will, is translated "(for Thy) pleasure," R.V., "(because of Thy) will."

(2) For *charis*, translated "pleasure" in the A.V. of Acts 24:27 and 25:9, see FAVOUR, A.1