

“THE WILL OF THE LORD”

I. Introduction

- A. As we remember the crucifixion of our Lord tonight, I want us to spend some time meditating upon this verse from Isaiah’s song of the Suffering Servant, a prophecy that was written over seven hundred years before Christ’s death.
- B. One thing that especially stands out when we look at this verse is that it is bracketed by the phrase “the will of the Lord.”
- C. This is a literary device called an *inclusio*, which is essentially a sandwich-shaped structure.
- D. By employing this structure, Isaiah is telling us that the theme of this verse is this idea of “the will of the Lord” and how it is carried out.

II. It Was the Will of the Lord to Crush Him

- A. The first thing that I want us to consider as we look at this verse is the meaning of this phrase “the will of the LORD.”
 - 1. The Hebrew word that the ESV translates with the noun “will” is actually a verb, a verb that means “to delight in” or “to be pleased.”
 - 2. We can see this in the KJV, where it is translated “it pleased the LORD to bruise him.”
 - 3. The Lord was pleased to crush Jesus.
 - 4. This does not mean that God the Father took delight in seeing his only Son suffer the physical and spiritual torments that he experienced on the cross.
 - 5. God was pleased to do this because it was the means by which his will was accomplished.

6. It was the key element in God's plan of salvation.
- B. We refer to this plan as the covenant of redemption, a covenant that was established in eternity between the three members of the Godhead.
1. In this covenant, God the Father promised to give certain people to God the Son, God the Son promised to secure the salvation of these people, and God the Spirit promised to apply this salvation in the lives of these people.
 2. The reason why God was pleased to crush his beloved Son was because this was his appointed plan for how to secure the salvation of all whom he appointed to eternal life.
 3. God was pleased to put Jesus to grief on the cross because of his commitment to save you from your sins.
- C. The word "crush" emphasizes the terrible fate that befell Jesus.
1. This is a word that is sometimes used to convey the idea of people being literally or figuratively trampled to death.
 2. We need to remember that the worst part of Christ's crucifixion was not the physical suffering that he had to endure.
 3. As painful as that was, it was nothing compared to the spiritual agony that he experienced in being made the object of God's wrath.
 4. It pleased the Lord to give Jesus up to this dreadful fate, even though he was perfectly innocent.
 5. As Isaiah says in verse 9, "he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth."
 6. Jesus did absolutely nothing to deserve the judgment that fell upon him as he hung on the cross.

7. He was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities.
- D. The emphasis in the first part of verse 10 is upon God's control over what happened to Jesus.
1. While it is true that wicked men were responsible for putting Jesus to death, they were only able to do so because it was the will of the Lord.
 2. It was ultimately the Lord who put Jesus to grief.
 3. Peter said the same thing to the crowd in his Pentecost sermon in Acts 2: "this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men." (Acts 2:23)
 4. This great injustice was carried out by people.
 5. God was in no way responsible for the evil that was perpetrated when the sinless Son of God was put on a cross.
 6. Yet God is always completely sovereign over the actions of his creatures.
 7. He is able to take what man intends for evil and use it to accomplish his good and holy purposes.
- E. We must not think that Jesus went to the cross under compulsion.
1. This is made clear by the fact that it was the will of the LORD to crush him, with LORD set in all capital letters.
 2. This is the covenant name of God, the name that we pronounce as Jehovah or Yahweh.
 3. It is the name of the Triune God, not just one member of the Trinity.

4. Jesus died on the cross because this was the plan that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit had bound themselves to in eternity past.
 5. Jesus was pleased to be put to grief for our sake because he took delight in doing his Father's will.
 6. Jesus perfectly sings the words of Psalm 40:8: "I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."
- F. The reason why the cross was the key element in God's plan is made clear in the next part of verse 10, where Jesus' death is described as "an offering for guilt."
1. This is the same terminology that is used for the guilt offerings in the books of Leviticus and Numbers.
 2. These were sacrifices that the people of Israel were instructed to make in order to make satisfaction for sin and thus restore their relationship with God.
 3. In the Old Testament sacrificial system, the guilt offering "was the most comprehensive type of offering for personal sin." [Webb, 213n]
 4. By using this term, Isaiah is telling us that Jesus' death on the cross was the comprehensive offering for the sins of his people.
 5. Jesus is the true sin-bearer.
 6. Because of his sacrifice, righteousness is imputed to everyone who lays hold of him by faith.
 7. If your faith rests upon Christ, then you can know for certain that all of your guilt has been taken away, once and for all.

III. The Will of the Lord Shall Prosper in His Hand

- A. As we turn to the second half of verse 10, we see that there is a shift of focus from Christ's humiliation on the cross to his exaltation on the other side of the cross.
1. Isaiah says, "when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days."
 2. Jesus' offering for guilt stands in sharp contrast to the Old Testament guilt offerings.
 3. In those sacrificial offerings, the animal victims ceased to exist once they were sacrificed.
 4. When those animals were crushed, they stayed dead.
 5. But this was not the case when Jesus was crushed.
 6. Death did not have the final say over him.
 7. Far from being a mark of failure, the cross was his moment of victory.
- B. On the basis of what Jesus accomplished on the cross, he now has the authority to ensure that every single one of those whom the Father gave him in the covenant of redemption is gathered into his fold.
1. This is what Isaiah means when he says that Jesus "shall see his offspring."
 2. He is telling us that not one of those for whom Jesus died will be lost.
 3. If you are a Christian, then you are one of Jesus' offspring.
 4. As we will see in our sermon on Hebrews 2 on Sunday, when Jesus triumphantly entered into paradise he made this announcement: "Behold, I and the children God has given me."

5. It looked like his death would ensure the snuffing out of his line, but the exact opposite occurred.
 6. By his triumph, Jesus produced untold children for a Zion that was hopelessly barren.
 7. This is the fulfillment of Isaiah 49, where these words are spoken to Zion: "Lift up your eyes around and see; they all gather, they come to you. As I live, declares the LORD, you shall put them all on as an ornament; you shall bind them on as a bride does. Surely your waste and your desolate places and your devastated land— surely now you will be too narrow for your inhabitants, and those who swallowed you up will be far away. The children of your bereavement will yet say in your ears: 'The place is too narrow for me; make room for me to dwell in.' Then you will say in your heart: 'Who has borne me these? I was bereaved and barren, exiled and put away, but who has brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; from where have these come?' Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations, and raise my signal to the peoples; and they shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders.'" (49:18–22)
 8. What Israel was not able to do, Jesus has done.
 9. He has been fruitful and multiplied.
 10. He has produced a people for God.
- C. This theme of offspring relates to the Davidic covenant, in which God promised that he would build a house, a dynasty, for David.
1. In 2 Samuel 7, God told David, "the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for

my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." (vv. 12-13)

2. This is what our passage is talking about when it says "he shall prolong his days."
 3. By his faithfulness, Jesus has built a house for God's name.
 4. He has redeemed a people in whom God will cause his presence to dwell for all eternity.
- D. Our verse ends by saying that "the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand."
1. Because Jesus subjected himself to death on a cross in submission to God's will, he has now been made the executor of God's redemptive plan.
 2. He has all the authority that he needs to put this plan into effect.
 3. This is why Jesus' first words when he gave the church its Great Commission were "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."
 4. This tells us that the church's disciple-making mission cannot fail.
 5. Christ has done all that is necessary to secure the redemption of all whom the Father has given him.
 6. All that remains to be done is the gathering in of the family.
 7. This is why the cross always has to be at the heart of the church's message.
 8. As E.J. Young points out, "all attempts to increase and to propagate the Church apart from the cross of Christ are in vain and doomed to failure. On the other hand, where the

doctrine of Christ's satisfaction is proclaimed in its biblical fullness, there the true Church progresses." [355]

9. The cause of Christ's kingdom doesn't always look very promising in this present age.
10. There are times of discouragement in our own lives as Christians.
11. But make no mistake: the will of the Lord will prosper in Jesus' hand.
12. He will bring the good work that he has begun in you, and in the lives of all his offspring, to completion.