

# “Let this mind be in you . . .”

## 7. “Not my will but Thine”

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**F**ROM MAN’S beginning it was made clear to him that it was the Divine will that he should hearken to what God said and obey what was asked of him. This meant that man had a choice: he could do the will of God; he could ignore the will of God, not deliberately doing the opposite but not accepting its application to him; he could act according to his own desire, behaving in a manner which was in complete contrast to God’s will.

Because Adam and Eve chose the last of these we are in the state we are. The consequences of their action have been experienced by everyone. Abraham and Sarah decided to choose this way too, and took matters into their own hands when God’s promise of a seed appeared to them to be taking too long to be effective. The consequences of their action are a primary cause of the continuing unrest in the land of promise. Instances not recorded in the Scriptures of the deliberate contravening of God’s desire by those who know of God’s purpose are innumerable, and those who have done so, and those involved with them, have suffered as a consequence.

There have been none who have chosen the first option, and have so perfectly maintained its application throughout their life, as did the Lord Jesus.

The incident in the temple at Jerusalem at the age of twelve indicated his intention and conviction: “I must be about my Father’s business” (Lk. 2:49). Later, in response to the disciple’s request, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples”, Jesus included in his answer, “Our Father Which art in heaven . . . Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth” (11:1,2), thus indicating the need for every disciple to acknowledge and accept this as the prime response of the created to the Creator.

Jesus showed how important this continued to be in his life when the disciples indicated their concern that he was not eating enough to main-

tain his strength and wellbeing. They implored: “Master, eat”. He replied: “I have meat to eat that ye know not of . . . My meat is to do the will of Him That sent me, and to finish His work” (Jno. 4:31,32,34).

In the next chapter of John’s Gospel there is recorded Jesus’s discourse on the relationship between his Father and himself. He begins by saying: “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise” (5:19). Since the Son had free will he must consciously and deliberately have been making this choice. Later he says: “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father Which hath sent me” (v. 30).

Shortly afterwards, as recorded in chapter 6, in speaking of the “bread of life”, he makes clear the reason for his coming. He declared, for the third time, this essential life-directing principle: “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him That sent me” (6:38).

So the principle was kept throughout his life, but its greatest test, surely, came in the last few moments of his freedom. Here he is not explaining his behaviour to others. He is in earnest and agonising communication with his Father in Gethsemane, and he expresses the desire that the principle which had governed everything so far should prevail despite the pain: “Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done” (Lk. 22:42). And it was.

Until our natures are changed we will continue to be faced with decisions that require us to choose—His will or ours. The courage and the strength to make the right choice will be found in the Word, in answer to fervent prayer and in knowing we can do it from past success. Let us follow the example of our Exemplar.